

Mapping Study on the Security Sector of Turkmenistan

Dr. Grazvydas JASUTIS, Richard STEYNE,
and Elizaveta CHMYKH



MAPPING STUDY ON THE SECURITY SECTOR OF TURKMENISTAN

**Dr. Grazvydas JASUTIS, Richard STEYNE, and Elizaveta CHMYKH,
experts from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)**

© Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2020

Cover Design: DTP Studio

Copyeditor: Jeanine Beck

ISBN: 92-9222-518-9

Foreword

This study maps key security actors in Turkmenistan, determines their competences and examines oversight powers and the role of oversight bodies in the broader national security system. It analyses security sector reforms across the intelligence, defence and law-enforcement spheres.

Turkmenistan's presidential system and status of permanent neutrality make its security system unique, even within the context of Central Asia. Surrounded by Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the country deals with significant geopolitical and security challenges that determine their foreign and security policy.

The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of their security system, particularly in light of the recent developments and changes that have occurred in the security sector.

Written and edited by DCAF experts, the study relies on primary and secondary data sources, and concludes with recommendations on the areas of the Turkmen security sector which could benefit from reform. To this end, the study aims to provide guidance and stimulate debate on how national authorities and international actors might better promote human rights and good governance principles in the security sector of Turkmenistan.

DCAF is committed to contributing to the security of Central Asian people through more accountable and effective security and justice systems. DCAF's core objective is to support the development of Central Asia's capacity to provide, manage and oversee the security and justice sectors within a framework of democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, thereby contributing to peace, justice and sustainable development.

Geneva, June 2020.

Darko Stancic

DCAF

Assisting Director, Head of Europe and Central Asia Division

Table Of Contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Statutory state security providers: functions and mandates.....	5
1.1 Armed forces and supporting services.....	5
1.2 Police and specialized law enforcement agencies.....	9
1.3 Presidential guards and close protection forces.....	10
1.4 Intelligence and secret services.....	11
1.5 Border and customs services.....	11
2. Security sector reforms: historical developments and current trends.....	15
2.1 Intelligence sector reform.....	15
2.2 Defence reform.....	17
2.3 Police reform.....	21
3. Security sector oversight: mechanisms and procedures.....	23
3.1 Legislative oversight.....	23
3.2 Executive oversight.....	26
3.3 The role of the prosecution service in oversight.....	27
4. Transgressions by security forces.....	28
Conclusion.....	29



List of abbreviations

BOMCA - Border Management in Central Asia Programme

CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States

CNS - Committee of National Security of the Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan

KGB - Committee for State Security [of Soviet Union]

MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs

MNS - Ministry of National Security

MPs - members of parliament

OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SCST - State Customs Service of Turkmenistan

SSR - security sector reform

SSR - Soviet Socialist Republic

Introduction

In early 2020, reports emerged that several high-level Turkmen security sector officials had been removed from office, suggesting that changes to Turkmenistan's security sector might be underway. In February 2020, the president of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, dismissed the Minister of National Security and Secretary of the State Security Council, Yaylym Berdiev, less than a month after he was publicly rebuked for perceived shortcomings in his performance. A month before, the Minister of Defence Begench Gundogdyev was given a similar rebuke for "improperly carrying out his service duties", and received a "... final warning".¹ Prior to that, in December 2019, the former minister of internal affairs, Isgender Mulikov, appeared in handcuffs on national TV, accused of corruption and embezzlement.² Authorities also arrested the former head of the State Migration Service on similar charges.³

These changes have shaken the security elite of Turkmenistan and raise the question as to whether they are part of a broader attempt to reform Turkmenistan's security sector.

The security system of Turkmenistan is formally managed through the State Security Council, which, in accordance with Article 71 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan, is led by the president, who also appoints and dismisses its members. Turkmenistan has a complex array of agencies responsible for the management and provision of security, including the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs and law enforcement agencies, Ministry of National Security, Security Service of the President, State Border Guard Service, State Migration Service and State Customs Service. As the head of state and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan, President Berdimukhamedov exerts tight control over these bodies.⁴ As the ultimate authority responsible for appointing ministers, justice officials, commanders of the armed forces, and approving national military doctrines, President Berdimukhamedov's authority over national security and defence structures extends to all aspects of security provision, management and oversight.⁵ In accordance with Article 68 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan, President Berdimukhamedov acts as a final guarantor of state sovereignty and Turkmenistan's status of permanent neutrality. Due to the nature of Turkmenistan's presidential system, security sector oversight powers are therefore primarily exercised by the president, and to a lesser extent, by bodies within the legislative and judicial branches.

This study seeks to map the main security actors in Turkmenistan and assess the process of security sector reforms since the independence of Turkmenistan in 1991. This topic has not merited any sustained academic attention until now. Turkmenistan's contemporary security architecture is based on its policy of permanent neutrality, its geopolitical situation, and its dependence on export revenues from natural gas.⁶ However, the intertribal relations in Turkmenistan add some complexity to understanding the security dilemma in the country. As recognized by a UN General Assembly resolution passed in December 1995, Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality has dissuaded it from pursuing membership of regional military structures, such as the Com-

¹ Turkmenistan.gov.tm. 2020. [online] Available from: <http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=20441> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Eurasianet. 2020. Туркменистан: Главные Силовики Страны Не Чувствуют Себя В Безопасности. [online] Available from: <https://russian.eurasianet.org/туркменистан-главные-силовики-страны-не-чувствуют-себя-в-безопасности> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

² Хроника Туркменистана. 2019. Арестован Экс-Глава МВД Мулликков. [online] Available from: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2019/12/arestovan-eks-glava-mvd-mullikov/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³ Хроника Туркменистана. 2019. За Взятничество Арестован Экс-Глава Миграционной Службы. [online] Available from: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2019/12/nobatov-arrested/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴ The Constitution of Turkmenistan, Article 68. Available from: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6502/file/Turkmenistan_Constitution_am2016_eng.pdf [Accessed 21 April 2020].

⁵ The Constitution of Turkmenistan, Article 71. Available from: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6502/file/Turkmenistan_Constitution_am2016_eng.pdf [Accessed 21 April 2020].

⁶ The Centre of European Security Studies, 2010. *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities*, p.48, Hartog, Merijn (ed.). Available from: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/119141/SSR_full-text.pdf

monwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and the Collective Security and Treaty Organization.

The Turkic nation finds itself sandwiched between powerful neighbours, and thus pursues an independent and isolationist defence and security policy. Turkmenistan's complexity of intertribal coexistence has conditioned relations between state authorities and citizens. This has limited the space for civil society to initiate debate on security sector reform (SSR), and thus for the effective monitoring of Turkmenistan's domestic security record. Together, these factors combine to make research into the Turkmen security sector challenging, and go some way to explaining the lack of comprehensive studies conducted in this area.

Notwithstanding these challenges, some authors have explored the Turkmen security sector, and generally posit that it retains many elements of its Soviet past, such as militarized law enforcement apparatuses, limited oversight mechanisms, and weak civil society.⁷ In 2010, Michael Denison analysed the progress of security sector reform in Turkmenistan, noting that "[Turkmenistan's] strategic posture of self-imposed isolation has had significant ramifications for the shape and content of the [Turkmen] domestic security sector".⁸ In his later study, he concluded that Turkmenistan's security system generally abstains from engagement with external actors.⁹ A short overview of national security bodies can be found in Vilmer's 2010 study, which also addressed defence budgets and military modernization processes.¹⁰ Murad Esenov has analysed the obstacles for effective civil control over the Turkmen security system, including weak public oversight of law enforcement bodies, and the limited role of civil society organizations.¹¹ Civil society has also been discussed by Yuri Fedorov, who analysed its place within the broader political landscape of Turkmenistan.¹² In the context of border protection and security, Vladimir Kudinov has provided a valuable overview of the powers of the president of Turkmenistan, and of the legislative and executive branches of government.¹³ David Lewis has analysed the process of police reform in Central Asia, including Turkmenistan.¹⁴ The role of legislative oversight has been addressed by Grazvydas Jasutis and Richard Steyne, who have explored in detail the role of the Mejlis (parliament) in overseeing the Turkmen security sector.¹⁵

In addition, some authors have addressed the Turkmen security sector through broader analyses of Turkmenistan's political landscape. These include N. Borisov, who has provided a detailed analysis of its political system, defining it as a unique system of governance based on a one-party presidential system.¹⁶ Svetlana Dzardanova has researched the first 10 years of President Berdimukhamedov's tenure, highlighting his role in driving state transformation.¹⁷

⁷ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T. (eds.), 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamerlane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁸ Denison, M., 2010. *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities*, p.49.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Vilmer, J-B., 2010. *Turkmenistan*. CHRIS.

¹¹ Есенов, М., 2004. Роль гражданских лиц в силовых структурах Туркменистана. Гражданский контроль национальной политики безопасности: Опыт стран СНГ. Сборник, pp.284–296.

¹² Фёдоров Ю., 2009. *Туркмения: время перемен? Индекс Безопасности*, № 34, Том 15.

¹³ Кудинов В., 2016. Особенности конституционно-правового регулирования полномочий главы государства, органов законодательной и исполнительной власти в республике Туркменистан в сфере защиты и охраны государственной границы. Южный университет (ИУБиП).

¹⁴ Lewis, D., 2011. *Reassessing the Role of OSCE Police Assistance Programing in Central Asia*. Occasional Paper Series, No. 4. Available from: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/ffa4e94c-6950-412d-99ef-29097a423da4/OPS-No-4-20110411.pdf>

¹⁵ Jasutis G., Steyne R., 2020. *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Turkmenistan*, in *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Case Studies from Central Asia*. Available from: <https://dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF%20Parliamentary%20Oversight%20jan%202020%20web.pdf>

¹⁶ Борисов Н., 2018. Президентство на постсоветском пространстве: процессы генезиса и трансформаций. РГГУ.

¹⁷ Дзрданова С., Туркменистан: анализ реформ Гурбангулы Бердымухамедова. Available from: <https://cabar>.

Peyrouse has compared the political reform process initiated and carried out by Niyazov and Berdymukhamedov, and concluded that the latter implemented only modest reforms.¹⁸ The transfer of power from Niyazov to Berdymukhamedov, and the resulting constitutional reform of 2008, has been researched by Y. Fiodorov, who echoed Peyrouse's view regarding the limited scope of Berdymukhamedov's reforms.¹⁹ Shoemaker has analysed Turkmenistan in the context of its relations with members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, concluding that Berdymukhamedov reversed some of the isolationist policies of his predecessor.²⁰ The political regime of Turkmenistan has also been researched more generally by Schensnovitch, Polese, Horák, Kunysz, Radchenko, and Kadyrov.²¹ Turkmenistan's policy of neutrality and its security concerns have been researched by Giulnara Djamieva, Merzekhanov, and Tiulpakov.²² Andrei Kazantsev has explored the contemporary security challenges in Turkmenistan, addressing factors which might drive state fragility, including intertribal conflict and "*Afghanization*".²³ Other scholars have analysed Turkmen-Russian relations, with some concluding that its strict policy of neutrality and consequential pursuance of an isolationist defence and security posture has limited its reliance on Russia for military and economic aid and support.²⁴ Robert Timm, who briefly addressed the military capabilities of Turkmenistan's armed forces, contends that the limited procurement of arms from Russia reflects Turkmenistan's attempt to remain independent, and thus distribute its procurement of weapons among regional powers.²⁵

This study is composed of four parts. The first maps the functions and mandates of Turkmenistan's statutory security providers. The second identifies and reviews the modest reforms undertaken in the security sector since independence, focusing on the intelligence, military and law enforcement sectors. This is followed by a comprehensive review of the oversight mechanisms as set out in the constitution and laws of Turkmenistan, and then by a brief examination of crimes carried out by security actors.

The study concludes that Turkmenistan has made some progress in reforming its security sector, but that much scope exists for national authorities to improve the provision, management and oversight of security. At the strategic level, there remains a lack of over-arching documentation regarding the direction and objectives of such reform processes, as well as the role of the Mejlis which needs to be clarified. At the sectorial level, Turkmen authorities have stated their commitment to undertaking reforms in the military, police and intelligence sectors. However, more efforts should be made to reinforce the practical application of rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as the inculcation of integrity and ethical behaviour across the security sector.

[asia/svetlana-dzardanova-turkmenistan-analiz-reform-gurbanguly-berdymuhamedova/?pdf=1902](#)

¹⁸ Peyrouse, S., 2012. *Turkmenistan: Strategies of Power, Dilemmas of Development*. Routledge.

¹⁹ Фёдоров Ю., 2009. *Туркмения: время перемен?*

²⁰ Shoemaker, M., 2012. *Russia & The Commonwealth of Independent States*. The World Today Series.

²¹ Horák S., Polese A., 2015. *A tale of two presidents: personality cult and symbolic nation-building in Turkmenistan*, in Nationalities Papers, 43:3, pp.457-478;

Kunysz N., 2012. *From sultanism to neopatrimonialism? Regionalism within Turkmenistan*. Central Asian Survey, 31:1, pp.1-16;

Кадыров С., 2003. "Нация" племен. Этнические истоки, трансформация и перспективы государственности в Туркменистане. Центр цивилизационных и региональных исследований ИА РАН;

Radchenko S., 2017. *Turkmenistan: Grasping for Legitimacy*. Journal of Democracy, Volume 28, Issue 3, pp.168-172.

Сченснович В., Туркменистан: вчера, сегодня, завтра.

²² Djamieva G., 2018. Dissertations for history PhD candidacy, Dushanbe.

Мирзеханов В., Тулпаков М., Доктрина позитивного нейтралитета и внешнеполитические приоритеты постсоветской Туркмении.

²³ 2017. Evolution of Post-Soviet Space: Past, Present, And Future. [online] Available from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/upload/iblock/5f5/evolutionofpostsovietspace.pdf> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

²⁴ Pannier, B., 2019. Is Turkmenistan being pulled into Russia's orbit? [online] Available from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/igshloq-ovozi-turkmenistan-pulled-into-russia-s-orbit/29713898.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

²⁵ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamerlane?* Lexington Books, p.380.



The current study relies on primary and secondary data. The authors interviewed Turkmen officials, international security experts and academics, representatives of the Turkmen diaspora and international organizations, as well as diplomats. These datasets were reinforced by an extensive review of open-source secondary data, ensuring the study was as comprehensive as possible.

Notwithstanding the above, the challenges of conducting research in the context of Turkmenistan meant that the authors were unable to obtain access to all legal acts and security strategies, policies, and reform concepts. However, the use of primary data allowed the authors to address the security sector in a more comprehensive manner than has hitherto been possible, and aims to provide a framework for further analysis.

In contrast to broader mapping studies, however, this study does not address the role of non-state security actors or civil society in providing and overseeing the security sector. The exclusion of these actors reflects their relative exclusion from the Turkmen state: to the authors' knowledge, no private security actors openly operate on Turkmen soil, and Turkmen civil society is not yet fully capacitated to play a meaningful role in security oversight.

1. Statutory state security providers: functions and mandates

Turkmenistan's security and defence sector is regulated in accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the law 'On Organs of National Security' (1998), and the Military Doctrine of Independent, Permanently Neutral Turkmenistan (2016), the latter of which develops provisions contained with the National Security Concept of Turkmenistan, and the Declaration On the Foreign Policy of Turkmenistan in the 21st Century, Based on Permanent Neutrality, the Principles of Peacefulness, Neighbourhood and Democracy.²⁶ Echoing Turkmenistan's founding constitution, the 2016 Military Doctrine emphasizes Turkmenistan's neutrality, defensive security posture, and commitment to strengthening relationships with neighbouring states.²⁷

In accordance with DCAF's typology of the security sector, Turkmenistan's statutory state security providers will be grouped into the following categories: 1) Armed forces and supporting services; 2) Police and specialized law enforcement agencies; 3) Presidential guards and close protection forces; 4) Intelligence and secret services; and 5) Border and customs services.

1.1 Armed forces and supporting services

The Law of Turkmenistan No. 134-IV of September 25, 2010, on Conscription and Military Service (last amended on 14 March 2020),²⁸ defines the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan as consisting of "bodies of military management, military units, military bodies and companies and military educational institutions". In addition, it defines "other bodies", including the State Border Guard Service of Turkmenistan, the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and "military bodies", including the Presidential Security Service, bodies of the Ministry of National Security, the State Migration Service, and State Customs Service, as military organs.²⁹ The law also obliges each male citizen of Turkmenistan, between the ages of 18 and 27 years, to undertake mandatory conscription with the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan for a period of two years. Women are not subject to such an obligation but may enter military service voluntarily.³⁰

Turkmenistan's Armed Forces are dominated by the 33,000-strong Turkmen Ground Forces,³¹ organized into five Military Districts, with the primary army combat power divided into an Armoured Regiment, four Motor Rifle Brigades, a Special Forces Regiment, with supporting Artillery and Air Defence Brigades.³² Largely formed of conscripted personnel, together they are charged with protecting "state sovereignty and security" in accordance with Article 20 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan.³³ Whilst the state budget allocated to the Ground Forces is not publicly announced, estimates of the total defence budget range from \$200 million (in 2019) to \$719 million (in 2014).³⁴ Owing to growing instability in northern Afghanistan, reports suggest

²⁶ 2016 Military Doctrine of Turkmenistan [document classified]. Органов военного управления, войсковых частей, соединений, военных органов и предприятий и военных учебных заведений.

²⁷ Turkmenistan.gov.tm. 2016. *Заседание Государственного Совета Безопасности Туркменистана*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=10501> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

²⁸ Deletion of words such as "the State Service of Turkmenistan to Combat Economic Crimes", "management", "heads of", more can be found here: http://base.spininform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=32424

²⁹ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2010. The law 'About conscription and military service'. Article 1. Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=32424> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁰ No public figures on the percentage of women in the Turkmen Armed Forces are available. For more information on gender-based conscription practices in Turkmenistan, see: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/women-armed-forces-baseline-study?download=true> p.6.

³¹ IISS, 2019. Chapter 5: *Russia and Eurasia*. The Military Balance, p.185.

³² Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamerlane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

³³ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2016. Available from: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6502/file/Turkmenistan_Constitution_am2016_eng.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁴ Khrolenko, A., 2019. *Turkmenistan among the three most influential military powers in the region*. Available from:

that as of 2016, up to 70% of Turkmen Ground Forces were stationed along the 744-mile border with Afghanistan.³⁵ Other sources report that large numbers of troops have also been engaged in activities related to traffic control, as well as being deployed in support of economic and infrastructure activities.³⁶

In recent years, President Berdymukhamedov has made military reform a central aspect of his policy platform,³⁷ culminating in the adoption of the 2016 Military Doctrine. However, sources suggest that the focus of this reform has been rearmament, rather than restructure.³⁸ To this end, and without its own military-industrial complex, and as a measure of Turkmenistan's effort to remain independent, it has attempted to distribute weapons procurement among regional powers, primarily, Turkey, China, Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Russia.³⁹ These include the purchase in 2009 and 2011 of 40 T-90 tanks from Russia, as well as a similar number of artillery and air defence systems.⁴⁰ Turkmen authorities have also reportedly purchased six Smerch multiple launch rocket systems, eight infantry fighting vehicles and more than 1,000 KamAZ trucks in the past decade, through the Russian state-owned arms manufacture Rosoboronexport.⁴¹ In addition, in 2016, Turkmenistan ordered an unspecified number of Turkish-made all-purpose armoured personnel carriers and mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles.⁴² Since 2015, Turkmenistan has increasingly relied on China for the procurement of air defence systems, including the HQ-7, HQ-9 and HQ-11, and other advanced surveillance and radio equipment.⁴³ Combined, this currently gives the Turkmen Ground Forces an estimated strength of 1,940 infantry fighting vehicles, 712 tanks, 338 self-propelled and towed artillery units, and 116 multiple launch rocket systems.⁴⁴ In 2018, Turkmen authorities awarded a multi-million pounds sterling defence contract to US arms manufacture Polaris Government and Defense, for the purchase of an unspecified number of lightweight tactical vehicles for the Turkmen special operations forces.⁴⁵

<https://uz.sputniknews.ru/columnists/20190815/12241329/Turkmenistan--v-troyke-regionalnykh-liderov-voennoy-moschi-.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; IISS, *The Military Balance 2016*, pp.185–207, estimates the 2014 Turkmen defence budget as \$719 million. Although these numbers are outdated, 2014 is the last year the IISS published budget numbers for all five Central Asian Republics. Other sources estimate the defence budget as substantially lower, at \$200 million: Global Security. 2016. *Turkmenistan Military Spending*. [online] Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-budget.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁵ Risk Advisory. 2020. *Turkmenistan | Moscow courts Ashgabat for security support*. [online] Available from: <https://www.riskadvisory.com/news/turkmenistan-moscow-courts-ashgabat-for-security-support/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁶ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment. 2016. *Russia and the CIS: Turkmenistan*, pp.63-66.

³⁷ Global Security. 2016. *Turkmenistan Military Spending*. [online] Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-budget.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁸ Global Security. 2016. *Turkmenistan Military Spending*. [online] Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-budget.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

³⁹ Kucera, J., 2017. *Report: Turkmenistan Is Turkey's Biggest Weapons Buyer*; Eurasianet. Available from: <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/82476> [Accessed 22 April 2020]. In recent years Turkmenistan has also purchased a substantial number of weapons and related supplies from Italian manufactures, primarily for modernization of its Air Force. Please see next section on the Turkmen Air Force for more information.

⁴⁰ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁴¹ Newscentralasia.net. 2019. *Military strength of Turkmenistan – News Central Asia*. [online] Available from: <http://www.newscentralasia.net/2019/08/19/military-strength-of-turkmenistan/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴² Defence Blog. 2016. *Turkmenistan has ordered to Turkey local-made armored vehicles*. [online] Available from: <https://defence-blog.com/army/turkmenistan-has-ordered-to-turkey-local-made-armored-vehicles.html> [Accessed 22 April 2020].

⁴³ Eurasianet. 2016. *Turkmenistan Shows Off New Chinese Rockets*. [online] Available from: <https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-shows-off-new-chinese-rockets> [Accessed 22 April 2020]; Ищенко, С., 2020. *Гонка Вооружений: России Предстоит Ловить Хвост Улетающего «Китайского Дракона»*. [online] Svpressa.ru. Available from: <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/255527/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴⁴ Globalfirepower.com. 2020. *Turkmenistan Military Strength (2020)*. [online] Available from: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=turkmenistan [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴⁵ Armyrecognition.com. 2018. *Polaris lands contract with Turkmenistan Special Forces | January 2018 Global Defense*

Officer training for the Turkmen Ground Forces is conducted at the Military Institute of the Ministry of Defense of Turkmenistan.⁴⁶ Alongside the Military Academy of Turkmenistan, which accommodates 1,100 cadets from different service branches,⁴⁷ sources suggest that officer training is also provided by several foreign countries, including Russia, the United States,⁴⁸ Pakistan, Turkey, and Ukraine.⁴⁹ Turkmen Ground Forces are currently directed by Chief of Staff Ismail Ismailiov, subordinate to Minister of Defence Major General Begench Gundogdyev, and ultimately, to the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan, President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov.

In addition to the Turkmen Ground Forces, the Turkmen Armed Forces also consist of two additional branches: the Turkmen Air Force, and the Turkmen Naval Force. The Turkmen Naval Force, numbering 3,000 personnel, boasts 72 aircraft, including 24 fighters, 20 attack and 3 transport planes. In addition, the Turkmen Air Force commands 25 helicopters, including 10 attack helicopters.⁵⁰ In contrast to the Turkmen Ground Forces and the Turkmen Naval Force, Turkmenistan's Air Force has received little investment since independence,⁵¹ reflecting Ashgabat's overwhelming preoccupation with securing its southern border against insurgent attacks and strengthening its internal security apparatuses. While the majority of Turkmenistan's combat-ready aircraft date to Soviet times, the authorities have, however, procured a modest number of new aircraft in recent years, primarily from Italian manufacturers, with two EH101 helicopters and five AW139 helicopters purchased in 2010 for a combined cost of €114.5 million, as well as three Selex ES Falco unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for €8.7 million in 2011.⁵² In 2017, reports also suggest that Turkmenistan procured a number of UAVs from China, including the WJ-600A and CH-3A.⁵³ From 2009–2014, sales of Italian armaments to Turkmenistan totalled €370 million, making Italy the European Union's largest exporter of military systems to Turkmenistan during that period.⁵⁴ This period of investment in Turkmenistan's Air Force also coincided with the adoption by President Berdimukhamedov in 2010 of a five-year military modernization plan.⁵⁵ This investment in the Air Force and adoption of the modernization plan likely reflected concerns with the deteriorating security situation in neighbouring Afghanistan

Security army news industry | Archives News Year 2018. [online] Available from: https://www.armyrecognition.com/january_2018_global_defense_security_army_news_industry/polaris_lands_contract_with_turkmenistan_special_forces.html [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴⁶ Science.gov.tm. n.d. *Military Institute of Ministry of Defense of Turkmenistan/Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan.* [online] Available from: http://science.gov.tm/en/organisations/military_institute/ [Accessed 21 April 2020].

⁴⁷ Turkmenistan.ru. 2007. *Military Academy of Turkmenistan inaugurated in Ashgabat | Turkmenistan.Ru.* [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/en/node/5310> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State. 2016. *Foreign Operations Assistance: Turkmenistan.* [online] Available from: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/2016/261456.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁴⁹ Newscentralasia.net. 2019. *Military Strength of Turkmenistan – News Central Asia.* [online] Available from: <http://www.newscentralasia.net/2019/08/19/military-strength-of-turkmenistan/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵⁰ Globalfirepower.com. 2020. *Turkmenistan Military Strength (2020).* [online] Available from: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=turkmenistan [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵¹ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁵² Unimondo.org. 2012. *Italia: ecco le armi esportate da Berlusconi a dittatori e regimi autoritari / Notizie / Home - Unimondo.* [online] Available from: <https://www.unimondo.org/Notizie/Italia-ecco-le-armi-esportate-da-Berlusconi-a-dittatori-e-regimi-autoritari-135097> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Vignarca, F., 2010. *Finmeccanica e il «fattore T» - Altreconomia.* [online] Altreconomia. Available from: https://www.altreconomia.it/?url_dettaglio=2535 [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Chronicles of Turkmenistan. 2018. *Turkmenistan purchases Italian military aircraft | Chronicles of Turkmenistan.* [online] Available from: <https://en.hronikatm.com/2018/05/turkmenistan-purchases-italian-military-aircraft/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵³ Ищенко, С., 2020. *Гонка Вооружений: России Предстоит Ловить Хвост Улетающего «Китайского Дракона».* [online] Svpressa.ru. Available from: <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/255527/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵⁴ Rai News. 2014. *L'export armato italiano ai regimi dell'ex URSS Intervista a Giorgio Beretta.* [online] Available from: http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/L-export-armato-italiano-ai-regimi-dell-ex-URSS-Intervista-a-Giorgio-Beretta-b0a850b2-32fd-457e-b715-9f43da2b047e.html?refresh_ce [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵⁵ Sources suggest that a 2015–2020 military modernization plan exists. However, it is not publicly available.

following the 2009 US troop surge, and heightened tensions with Azerbaijan in 2009 regarding ownership of three hydrocarbon oil fields in the Caspian Sea.⁵⁶

Of the three branches of Turkmenistan's Armed Forces, the Turkmen Naval Force, numbering 500–700 sailors, has received the most significant investment in recent years.⁵⁷ The 2009 Presidential Decree noted that this investment would ensure that Turkmenistan had the ability “to fight effectively against smugglers, terrorists and any other forces who try to illegally use our state sea border or create an unstable situation”.⁵⁸ The Naval Force of Turkmenistan was officially established in January 2010 by presidential decree.⁵⁹ Prior to this, coastal protection was delegated exclusively to the Turkmen Border Guards. Some speculate that the substantial modernization of, and investment in, the Turkmen Naval Force programme signifies the ambition of Ashgabat to establish its own Navy Command.⁶⁰

The Turkmen Naval Force boasts 16 patrol boats, including a former U.S. Coast Guard vessel.⁶¹ In recent years, its force has also been supplemented with the purchase, in 2011, of two Project 1241.8-class missile corvettes from the Russian-owned Sredne-Nevisky Shipyard Company,⁶² two missile boats from Turkey,⁶³ as well as a number of smaller patrol boats from France.⁶⁴ Reports suggest that Turkmenistan may now host the strongest naval force in the Caspian sea, second only to Russia.⁶⁵

Since 2015, forces of the Turkmen Navy have been trained at the Turkmen Naval Institute, based in the coastal city of Turkmenbashi,⁶⁶ and in 2014 the Naval Institute partnered with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Ashgabat to deliver training on maritime border security and port management procedures to 105 cadets.⁶⁷

⁵⁶ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. 2009. *Flare-Up In Turkmen-Azerbaijani Dispute. Latest Nabucco Challenge*. [online] Available from: https://www.rferl.org/a/FlareUp_In_TurkmenAzerbaijani_Dispute_Latest_Nabucco_Challenge/1786632.html [Accessed 20 April 2020]; In 2018, all five states bordering the Caspian Sea – Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – signed the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea in the Kazakh city of Aktau. The Convention established a formula to divide the resources of the Caspian Sea, and prevent other powers from establishing military bases there. See: BBC News. 2018. *Caspian Sea: Five countries sign deal to end dispute*. [online] Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-45162282> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁵⁷ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁵⁸ Open Source Centre. Central Eurasia: Daily Report (hereafter CEDR), August 31, 2009, Doc. No. CEP-950194.

⁵⁹ Globalsecurity.org. n.d. *Turkmenistan - Naval Forces*. [online] Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-navy.htm> [Accessed 22 April 2020]; Ливенцев, Д., 2010. *Туркменские Военно-Морские Силы*. [online] Cyberleninka.ru. Available from: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/turkmenskie-voenno-morskie-sily/viewer> [Accessed 22 April 2020]; Phone interview with Turkmen expert on 11 April 2020 to discuss the subordination.

⁶⁰ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁶¹ International Institute of Strategic Studies. *The Military Balance*, 14 March 2013.

⁶² Newscentralasia.net. 2019. *Military Strength of Turkmenistan – News Central Asia*. [online] Available from: <http://www.newscentralasia.net/2019/08/19/military-strength-of-turkmenistan/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁶³ Nichol, J., 2013. *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. [online] Fas.org. Available from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/97-1055.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁶⁴ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.380.

⁶⁵ Kucera, J. *Turkmenistan: Ashgabat Quietly Builds Up Caspian Military Might*. Eurasianet, 5 July 2012.

⁶⁶ Newscentralasia.net. 2015. *Turkmen Navy Starts Taking Shape – Berdiev Promoted To 4-Star General – News Central Asia*. [online] Available from: <http://www.newscentralasia.net/2015/10/12/turkmen-navy-starts-taking-shape-berdiev-promoted-to-4-star-general/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁶⁷ Osce.org. 2014. *OSCE Centre trains Turkmenistan cadets in land and maritime security*. [online] Available from: <https://www.osce.org/ashgabat/124394> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

1.2. Police and specialized law enforcement agencies

Law enforcement in Turkmenistan is primarily carried out by the national police of Turkmenistan, under the direction and authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Turkmen *militiya* was renamed 'police' in 1998 by a decree of former president Saparmurat Niyazov 'On the Formation of the Police of Turkmenistan'.⁶⁸ Members of the national police of Turkmenistan are charged with maintaining public order and certain administrative tasks such as controlling the internal passport regime, issuing visas for foreign travel, and registering foreign guests.⁶⁹ The legal basis of the national police of Turkmenistan derives principally from the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the 2011 law 'On Internal Affairs Bodies of Turkmenistan' (last amended on 14 March 2020) and, up until 2011, the 2007 law 'On the Police of Turkmenistan' (abolished in 2011). Basic, in-service and specialized training is provided by the Police Academy of Turkmenistan, established in 1993, and which consists of five faculties, focusing on law, special institutions, fire-technical skills, Internal Troops, and advanced training, respectively.⁷⁰ From 2008 to 2016, the State Service for Protection of Safety of a Healthy Society (SSPSHS) (formerly the State Drug Control Service) was the primary agency responsible for the implementation of state policy in the sphere of drug enforcement.⁷¹ Initially regulated in accordance with Law No. 354-IV 'On the service to protect the safety of healthy society' of 22 December 2012, the SSPSHS was tasked with the prevention of illicit sales of narcotic drugs, combating their illegal import and trafficking, establishing effective transfrontier cooperation, and implementing related international obligations of Turkmenistan.⁷² Created by presidential decree, the SSPSHS reported directly to President Berdymukhamedov, and was independent from both the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of National Security.⁷³ In 2016, its personnel and functions were transferred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the service abolished.

The national police force of Turkmenistan is aided by the Internal Troops of Turkmenistan, a paramilitary force under the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan numbering around 25,000 personnel⁷⁴ but managed and directed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs under the authority of the current Minister, Mammetkhan Chakiyev.⁷⁵ Trained at the Internal Troops Facility of the Police Academy, as well as at the Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Internal Troops were formally established in 1992 by presidential decree.⁷⁶ In accordance with the Law No. 74-II on the Internal Troops of Turkmenistan (last amended on 8 July 2019), the tasks of the Internal Troops are to: support other law enforcement bodies of Turkmenistan in pursuance of public order; protect the life, health, rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens against criminal and other illegal actions; support criminal justice bodies with respect to persons serving custodial sentences; provide supervision for people who are under treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction; protect important state facilities and objects; and participate in the implementation of emergency rule.⁷⁷

⁶⁸ Presidential Decree 'On the Formation of the Police of Turkmenistan', 1998.

⁶⁹ Data.mongabay.com. n.d. *Turkmenistan-Internal Security Forces*. [online] Available from: https://data.mongabay.com/history/turkmenistan/turkmenistan-internal_security_forces.html [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁷⁰ Science.gov.tm. n.d. *Академия Полиции Туркменистана Имени Генерала Армии Туркменистана С.А.Ниязова*. [online] Available from: http://science.gov.tm/organisations/police_academy/ [Accessed 22 April 2020].

⁷¹ Chingjin, A., Fedorova, O., 2014. *Drug Situation and Drug Policy*, p.21.

⁷² The Constitution of Turkmenistan. Article 5. Law No.354-IV 'On the service to protect the safety of healthy society' of 22 December 2012.

⁷³ Central Asia News. 2016. *Turkmenistan strengthens efforts against drug trafficking*. [online] Available from: https://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2016/10/21/feature-01 [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁷⁴ Marat, E., 2009. *The Military and the State in Central Asia: From Red Army to Independence*.

⁷⁵ Turkmenistan Today. 2020. *Outcomes of activity of security forces in January – March reviewed at the session of the State Security Council*. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/articles.aspx&article21981&cat26> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁷⁶ Presidential Decree 'On the Formation of the Internal Troops of Turkmenistan'.

⁷⁷ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2001. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About internal troops of Turkmenistan'*. Article 13. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=2422> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

1.3 Presidential guards and close protection forces

In accordance with Article 13 of the Law of Turkmenistan On the President of Turkmenistan, the physical protection of the president, his spouse, and family members, is vested in the Presidential Security Service.⁷⁸ In addition, the service provides the president with special means of communication, and together with the Office of the Presidential Administration of Turkmenistan and the Ministry of National Security of Turkmenistan, housing and transportation services.⁷⁹ Originally, under the Decree of the Supreme Council of the Turkmen Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) 'On Ensuring the Activities of Senior Officials of The Turkmen SSR' of November 16, 1990,⁸⁰ the protection of the president of Turkmenistan was assigned to a unit of the National Security Committee of the Turkmen SSR, the forerunner to the current Presidential Security Service. In the early 1990s, the Security Service was transformed into an independent body, reporting directly to the president under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Akmurad Rejepov.⁸¹ Until 2007, experts considered the Presidential Security Service as the most powerful security apparatus in Turkmenistan.⁸² In 2007–2010, sources reported that President Berdymukhamedov attempted to curtail the power of the agency, instead favouring the Turkmen Armed Forces.⁸³

In accordance with the law 'On Operative-Search Activity' of September 23, 1994,⁸⁴ the Presidential Security Service is also vested with powers to carry out operational-investigative activities. Currently, sources suggest that the Presidential Security Service is composed of 2,000 employees, including the Personal Guard of the President (1st division), and three special operations battalions.⁸⁵

The National Guard of Turkmenistan, a paramilitary body made up of 700–1000 personnel,⁸⁶ is also tasked with the protection of the President of Turkmenistan, other senior government officials, and important state facilities.⁸⁷ Thus, despite its name, the National Guard closely resembles what military theorists would normally refer to as a 'presidential guard' or 'close protection forces'. It was established in October 1991,⁸⁸ but little public information is available on its development since. In addition to the Presidential Security Service and National Guard, the Independent Honor Guard Battalion of the Ministry of Defence of Turkmenistan, consisting of 100 personnel, split between two infantry and one cavalry company, is also mandated to protect the presidential palace in Ashgabat.⁸⁹

⁷⁸ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2011. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About the President of Turkmenistan'. Article 13.* [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/content/zakon-turkmenistana-o-prezidente-turkmenistana> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁷⁹ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2011. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About the President of Turkmenistan'. Article 12.*

⁸⁰ Decree of the Supreme Council of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic 'On Ensuring the Activities of Senior Officials of The Turkmen SSR', 1990. For more information, see: 2013. *Кое-Что О Президентской Охране.* [online] Available from: https://pikabu.ru/story/koechto_o_prezidentskoy_okhrane_5967301 [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁸¹ Decree of the Supreme Council of the Turkmen Socialist Soviet Republic 'On Ensuring the Activities of Senior Officials of The Turkmen SSR', 1990. For more information, see: 2013. *Кое-Что О Президентской Охране.* [online] Available from: https://pikabu.ru/story/koechto_o_prezidentskoy_okhrane_5967301 [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁸² Phone interview with Professor Andrey Kazantsev on 5 April 2020.

⁸³ Phone interview with Turkmen security expert on 20 March 2020.

⁸⁴ Law of Turkmenistan with Law on Operative-Search Activity, 1994. For more information, see: 2013. *Кое-Что О Президентской Охране.* [online] Available from: https://pikabu.ru/story/koechto_o_prezidentskoy_okhrane_5967301 [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁸⁵ Chronicles of Turkmenistan. 2013. *Some facts about the Presidential security team | Chronicles of Turkmenistan.* [online] Available from: <https://en.hronikatm.com/2013/06/some-facts-about-the-presidential-security-team/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁸⁶ Vassiliev, A. (ed.), 2001. *Central Asia: Political and Economic Challenges in the Post-Soviet Era.* Saqi Books. p.119. While this document relates to 2001, no newer publications have been found regarding this issue.

⁸⁷ Abazov, R., 2005. *Historical Dictionary of Turkmenistan.* Reference Reviews, 19(7), p.18.

⁸⁸ Smith D.L., 1998. *Breaking Away from the Bear.* p.30.

⁸⁹ The Independent Honor Guard Battalion of the Ministry of Defence of Turkmenistan. Available from: <http://www.parahat.info/news/parahat-info-news-14928> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

1.4. Intelligence and secret services

The Ministry of National Security (MNS), known as the Committee for National Security until 2002, is the primary intelligence-gathering agency for the government of Turkmenistan. The law on organs of national security of Turkmenistan suggests⁹⁰ the MNS wields extraordinary powers in pursuit of its aims, which closely mirror that of the Committee for National Security. The MNS is used to provide advanced training to military and non-military personnel from across Turkmenistan's defence and security establishment.⁹¹ In 2005, the Counter Terrorism Training Center of the MNS was opened in Ashgabat.⁹² Currently headed by Gurbanmyrat Annaev,⁹³ the MNS hosts regional departments in the Turkmen regions of Ahal, Balkan, Dashoguz and Lebap. Further information on the reform process of the intelligence service is provided in section 2 of the study, below.

1.5. Border and customs services

The Law of Turkmenistan No. 390-IV of May 4, 2013, on the Border Troops of Turkmenistan (last amended on 10 October 2018), defines the Border Troops of Turkmenistan as "special troops intended for protection of [the] Frontier of Turkmenistan, safety and sovereignty of Turkmenistan [and] implementation of border control...".⁹⁴ In accordance with the above-mentioned law, the Border Troops are tasked with the protection of Turkmenistan's land and maritime borders as well as protecting political, economic, military and other state interests, and preventing illegal entry into Turkmenistan via implementation of Turkmenistan's boundary regime.⁹⁵ As the primary body responsible for the protection of Turkmenistan's maritime borders, the Turkmen Naval Force cooperates closely with the Border Troops. Currently directed by Colonel Shadurdi Durdiev, the head of the State Border Guard Service, the Border Troops consist of land, sea, and air units, as well as institutes of higher education.⁹⁶

Originally established on 11 August 1992, by order of the former president of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, the State Border Service (formerly The Border Guard Command) was established to replace the Soviet-era Central Asian Border Troops District of the Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union.⁹⁷ On the basis of the Russian-Turkmen Treaty on Joint Measures signed in July 1992,⁹⁸ and the December 1993 Agreement on Joint Protection of the State Border of Turkmenistan, and the status of military personnel of the Border Troops of the Rus-

⁹⁰ The Law 'On Organs of National Security of Turkmenistan' (with amendments from 1997, 1998 and 2003).

⁹¹ Turkmenportal. 2012. *Институт Комитета Национальной Безопасности Туркменистана* | ВУЗЫ. [online] Available from: <https://turkmenportal.com/catalog/1730> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹² Sof-mag.ru. n.d. *Спецподразделения Туркменистана*. [online] Available from: http://sof-mag.ru/spec_arms/turkmenistan_spec.html [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Hyno.ru. n.d. *Политическая Роль Военных/Силовых Структур / Туркмения / Политический Атлас Современности*. [online] Available from: <http://www.hyno.ru/tom2/1668.html> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹³ Turkmenistan Today. 2020. *Outcomes of activity of security forces in January – March reviewed at the session of the State Security Council*. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/articles.aspx&article21981&cat26> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹⁴ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2013. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Border troops of Turkmenistan'*. Article 4. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=65994> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹⁵ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2013. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Border Troops of Turkmenistan'*. Article 4. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=65994> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹⁶ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2013. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Border Troops of Turkmenistan'*. Article 5. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=65994> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹⁷ *Turkmenistan's Military Co-operation and Foreign Relations with Russia*. p.133. [online] Available from: https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/14320/10/10_chapter%203.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2020].

⁹⁸ *Turkmenistan's Military Co-operation and Foreign Relations with Russia*. p.129. [online] Available from: https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/14320/10/10_chapter%203.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2020].

sian Federation in the territory of Turkmenistan,⁹⁹ the Border Guard Command remained under joint Turkmen-Russian control until 20 December 2000, when the last members of the Russian Task Force of the Federal Border Service, left Turkmenistan.¹⁰⁰ During this period, about 5,000 personnel served in the Border Troops of Turkmenistan,¹⁰¹ including an estimated 1,000 Russian border troops,¹⁰² with the OG FPS performing an advisory role and educational functions.¹⁰³

The exit of Russian troops coincided with the reduction in ties between Turkmenistan and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Turkmenistan had enjoyed the status of 'founding member', having ratified the CIS Creation Agreement in 1991, but not the subsequent charter in order to become a member of the CIS, and therefore had limited engagement with CIS initiatives. By 2001, representatives of the Turkmen Border Guards were, however, absent for the 40th meeting of the Council of Commanders of the Border Troops of the CIS countries held in Baku.¹⁰⁴ By 2005, Turkmenistan had downgraded its membership of the CIS to 'associate member', citing the need to align its membership of regional organizations with its 'status of permanent neutrality', which was accepted by the UN General Assembly on 12 December 1995.¹⁰⁵ In the years preceding this, the Turkmen Border Guards had undergone their first substantial period of reform, driven by a number of factors which necessitated a strengthening of border regime practices. These included an armed incident along the Turkmen-Uzbek border in December 1998, in which three Turkmen law enforcement officials were reportedly killed.¹⁰⁶ A year later, in September 1999, while attempting to arrest a group of ethnic Uzbeks, suspected to be members of a proscribed terrorist group, in the Turkmen city of Dashoguz, one detainee reportedly blew himself up, injuring many.¹⁰⁷ Further incidents in 2000–2001, combined with growing instability in Afghanistan, led President Niyazov to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 15, 2000, in which he demanded "to immediately put an end to the increasing violations of the state border".¹⁰⁸ By the end of 2001, 11 new border posts were created along the Turkmen-Uzbek border, in the Dashoguz region, and 10 in the Lebap region, which borders Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. By the end of 2001, the Border Troops were strengthened with the addition of 500 new personnel, and three new border detachments were created.¹⁰⁹

Since the early 2000s, the Turkmen Border Troops have grown to an estimated 12,000-strong force,¹¹⁰ and now boast their own higher educational institute, the Turkmen State Border Ser-

-
- ⁹⁹ Under this agreement, Turkmenistan would pay all costs for maintaining Russian military forces on its territory, and Russia would be granted the right to maintain an air force and air defence system on Turkmen soil. For more information, see: https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/14320/10/10_chapter%203.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- ¹⁰⁰ *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities*. p.48 [online]; Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online] Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20121114025436/http://www.agentura.ru/press/about/jointprojects/greatgame/pogranturkmen/> [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- ¹⁰¹ *Turkmenistan's Military Co-operation and Foreign Relations with Russia*. p.133.
- ¹⁰² Nichol, J., 2013. *Turkmenistan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*. p.14 [online] Fas.org. Available from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/97-1055.pdf> [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- ¹⁰³ Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online].
- ¹⁰⁴ Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online].
- ¹⁰⁵ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. 2005. *CIS: Turkmenistan Reduces Ties To 'Associate Member'*. [online] Available from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1061002.html> [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- ¹⁰⁶ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. 2001. *Turkmen Report: August 12, 2001*. [online] Available from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1347096.html> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online].
- ¹⁰⁷ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. 2001. *Turkmen Report: August 12, 2001*. [online] Available from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1347096.html> [Accessed 20 April 2020].
- ¹⁰⁸ Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online].
- ¹⁰⁹ Web.archive.org. n.d. *Государственная Пограничная Служба Туркменистана*. [online].
- ¹¹⁰ Burghart, D., Sabonis-Helf, T., 2018. *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamilane?* Lexington Books, p.381.

vice Institute, established in 2011 in Ashgabat, and according to reports, extensively refurbished in 2014.¹¹¹ In recent years, efforts have also been made to modernize certain border posts and checkpoints, including extensive renovation and expansion of border posts in the Balkan region of Turkmenistan.¹¹² Despite this, experts still disagree as to the effectiveness of the Turkmen Border Troops.¹¹³ To this end, it is worth noting that in recent years the State Border Guard Service has collaborated with the international community, both through bilateral assistance programmes¹¹⁴ and cooperation with international and regional organizations, including through the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat and the EU-funded Border Management in Central Asia Programme (BOMCA).¹¹⁵ This cooperation signals the importance Turkmen authorities place on the Turkmen Border Troops for ensuring state security, and provides possible avenues to allow the international community to intensify cooperation in the area of border management, with a view to creating incentives for enhanced dialogue on broader security sector reforms.

In addition to the State Border Service and its Border Troops, the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan (SCST), in accordance with the Law of Turkmenistan No. 91-IV of 12 March 2010, on the Customs Service of Turkmenistan (last amended on 30 November 2019), is defined as the central executive agency charged with performing state policy with regard to the regulation of the customs system of Turkmenistan. The SCST ensures compliance with Turkmenistan's international obligations on customs issues, as well as conducting the fight against smuggling, administrative crimes and related other offences.¹¹⁶ The State Customs Service of Turkmenistan also derives its power from the Customs Code of Turkmenistan (last amended 1 April 2020), which defines the legal, economic and organizational foundations of the state regulation of customs in Turkmenistan.¹¹⁷

Article 3 of the law 'On the Customs Service of Turkmenistan' defines the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan as including its central office, training centre, Directorate of Economic Management, customs offices and posts in provinces, and other self-supporting organizations.¹¹⁸ The SCST is directed by a chairman, currently M. Hudaykuliyeu,¹¹⁹ who is appointed and dismissed

¹¹¹ Государственное информационное агентство Туркменистана. 2014. *Президент Туркменистана Принял Участие В Открытии Комплекса Зданий Государственной Пограничной Службы И Пограничного Института*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=7860> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹¹² Turkmenistan Today. 2017. *The President of Turkmenistan takes part in the opening of new facility of the State Border Guard Service* | TDH. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/articles.aspx&article9592&cat26> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹¹³ *Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty* p.381. versus Hays, J., 2008. *Military of Turkmenistan | Facts and Details*. [online] Factsanddetails.com. Available from: http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Turkmenistan/sub8_7d/entry-4833.html#chapter-1 [Accessed 22 April 2020].

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense, Foreign Military Training, Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013, Joint Report to Congress, Volume 1, 2013.

¹¹⁵ Osce.org. 2015. *OSCE trains Turkmenistan border guards in border management and threat assessment*. [online] Available from: <https://www.osce.org/ashgabat/154276> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; Osce.org. 2016. *Border Guards complete OSCE training course on patrolling in Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <https://www.osce.org/ashgabat/266936> [Accessed 20 April 2020]; EEAS - European Commission. 2019. *The EU helps training border guards, customs and migration officers in Central Asia on modern border control procedures and mechanisms*. [online] Available from: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/turkmenistan/58363/eu-helps-training-border-guards-customs-and-migration-officers-central-asia-modern-border_zh-hant [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹¹⁶ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2010. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Customs Service'*. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=30941> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹¹⁷ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2010. *The Law 'On the Customs Code of Turkmenistan'*. Available from: <https://customs.gov.tm/ru/laws/tamozhenny-kodeks-turkmenistana>. For information on the amendment dated 1 April 2020, see: <https://customs.gov.tm/en/news/1284>

¹¹⁸ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2010. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Customs Service'*. [online] Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=30941> [Accessed 20 April 2020], and Customs.gov.tm. n.d. *About Us – State Customs Service of Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <https://customs.gov.tm/en/about-us/gosudarstvennaya-tamozhennaya-sluzhba-turkmenistana> [Accessed 22 April 2020].

¹¹⁹ Customs.gov.tm. 2020. *Outcomes of activity of security forces in January – March reviewed at the session of the State*

by the president of Turkmenistan, along with the vice-chairman and chiefs of the customs offices.¹²⁰ As a member of the World Customs Organization (WCO), the SCST is also mandated to ensure compliance with conventions sponsored or administered by the Customs Cooperation Council of the WCO.¹²¹ As with the State Border Guard Service, the State Customs Service is officially defined as a 'military body'.¹²²

Security Council. [online] Available from: <https://customs.gov.tm/en/news/1286> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹²⁰ *Law of Turkmenistan 'About Customs Service'*. 2010.

¹²¹ Wcoomd.org. 2019. *Conventions sponsored or administered by the Customs Co-operation Council*. [online] Available from: <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/about-us/legal-instruments/conventions.aspx> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹²² The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2010. *Law of Turkmenistan 'About conscription and military service'*. Available from: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=32424> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

2. Security sector reforms: historical developments and current trends

2.1 Intelligence sector reform

Intelligence services can make a significant contribution to national security through the provision of accurate intelligence on the range of risks and threats faced by the state. In the context of security sector reform, particularly in the post-Soviet region, intelligence agencies and services have received little attention from national or international actors, and thus frequently require substantial reform to bring them into line with best practice in security sector governance.¹²³ As with other Central Asian states, this remains the case for Turkmenistan.

On 30 September 1991, the Committee for State Security (KGB) of Soviet Turkmenistan was reorganized and renamed the Committee of National Security of the Soviet Republic of Turkmenistan (CNS).¹²⁴ Due to the legacy of the Soviet legal system, and limited human resources, this reorganization did not result in significant reform of the legal basis, structure and functions of the service. As with many other post-Soviet states, the law 'On the Organs of State Security' of the USSR served as the platform for the creation of respective national laws. This was the case for Turkmenistan, which adopted the law 'On Organs of National Security' of Turkmenistan on 12 April 1993, which remained remarkably similar to its predecessor.¹²⁵ The legal norms of the law echoed and reflected the structure, functions and methods of the KGB. Furthermore, the heads of the reorganized CNS were former members of the Soviet KGB, meaning the CNS was unable to embrace new working practices and cultures.

By early 2001, however, some signs of change within the CNS had emerged. In January of that year, President Niyazov ordered an increase in the number of CNS personnel from 1,500 to 2,500, noting the CNS's success in arresting and removing some 10,000 foreign citizens from the country, as well as confiscating "350,000 religious books incompatible with our faith".¹²⁶ After the dismissal and arrest of the head of the CNS, Muhamet Nazarov, on 4 March 2002, on the order of President Niyazov, the CNS underwent a radical process of reform. Prior to his dismissal and arrest, Nazarov had already been demoted to the rank of lieutenant general for alleged "shortcomings in the work". Thereafter, he was dismissed from all posts, arrested and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

In support of the president, the then minister of internal affairs, the prosecutor general and the chairman of the supreme court referred to offences, abuse of power and the direct interference of the CNS in the state affairs of Turkmenistan.¹²⁷ While it is not possible to track the legislative changes that followed the reform of the CNS, presidential statements suggested a comprehensive and somewhat modern approach to reorganizing the service. On 15 March 2002, the president invited

¹²³ Hannah, G., O'Brien, K. A., and Rathmell, A., 2005. *Intelligence and Security Legislation for Security Sector Reform*. [online] Rand.org. Available from: https://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR288.html [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹²⁴ Тумшиш М., 2012. Щит и меч Советского Союза. Справочник: краткие биографии руководителей органов государственной безопасности СССР и союзных республик (декабрь 1922 – декабрь 1991). [online] Available from: <https://www.litmir.me/br/?b=578162&p=1>

¹²⁵ Редкоус В.М., 2010. *Историко-правовые аспекты формирования современного административного законодательства в области обеспечения национальной безопасности (опыт России и стран — участниц СНГ)*. Вестник Московского университета МВД России № 3.

¹²⁶ Memohrc.org. 2008. *Туркменистан: Власти Строят «Железный Занавес» По Рецептам Сталинской Диктатуры | Правозащитный Центр «Мемориал»*. [online] Available from: <https://memohrc.org/ru/news/turkmenistan-vlasti-stroyat-zheleznyy-zanaves-po-receptam-stalinskoy-diktatury#sdfootnote1sym> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹²⁷ Turkmenistan.ru. 2002. *Президент Туркменистана признал неудовлетворительной работу руководства КНБ*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/14543> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

members of parliament, ministers, heads of local administration and law enforcement agencies and announced that “the CNS would no longer possess intrusive powers to interfere in the private life of citizens and the activities of commercial enterprises”. He declared his intention to reform the entire organization, including the work of its departments and offices, and advised that he had already initiated substantial changes within its top management, dismissing 80% of its senior officials. The CNS would refocus its activities on protecting national security, while areas normally within the purview of law enforcement bodies, such as combatting theft, fraud and drug trafficking, would be transferred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.¹²⁸ These functional changes were reinforced by the appointment of a new head of the CNS, former minister of internal affairs, Poran Berdiev, who had never served in the KGB. The CNS was renamed the Ministry of National Security (MNS) to communicate the role of the service, and its new mandate.¹²⁹ According to Article 11 of the newly adopted law ‘On Organs of National Security’ of Turkmenistan,¹³⁰ the MNS would be a state body charged with the implementation of laws concerning the system of national security, and was bestowed with the power to issue normative acts, govern national security agencies and ensure the protection of national security. Article 14 privileges a vast array of competences to the service, including undertaking intelligence and counter-intelligence activities, operational search activities, and preliminary investigations; developing and implementing measures to combat organized crime, corruption and drug trafficking; preventing and suppressing civic unrest and inter-ethnic conflicts; participating in the development and implementation of measures to protect state secrets, as well as measures to ensure border and customs regimes, amongst others. Based on these powers, the MNS became a key player in domestic and external security processes. After the alleged assassination attempt against the former president Niyazov on 25 November 2002, the MNS played a critical investigative role, both at home and abroad.¹³¹

After the election of Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov in 2007, the MNS underwent further changes, particularly regarding appointments at senior level. However, little information exists on attempts to change the working practices and culture of the service. From 2007 to 2020, President Berdimukhamedov dismissed and appointed heads of the MNS no less than six times, most recently appointing Gurbanmyrat Annaev (in February 2020), former deputy minister of the MNS.¹³²

While the intent to conduct internal reforms linked to functions and methods has not been publicly stated, a reorientation and expansion of its functions can be witnessed. On the occasion of National Security Service Workers’ Day in 2018, the president urged the MNS to refocus its efforts on the prevention of global threats such as international terrorism, extremism and drug smuggling. He also noted the importance of enhanced inter-agency cooperation between the MNS and law enforcement bodies for ensuring national security, the well-being of the country and upholding the rule of law.

Despite attempts to bring the MNS into line with modern intelligence services through re-focusing their work on issues concerning national security, Turkmen authorities considered other reforms intended to enhance the quality of service and improve the lives and welfare of its personnel.¹³³ In

¹²⁸ Turkmenistan.ru. 2002. *Сапармурат Ниязов объявил о резком сокращении полномочий комитета национальной безопасности* | Интернет-Газета Turkmenistan.Ru. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/14474> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹²⁹ RIA News, 2002. *Комитет Национальной Безопасности Туркмении По Решению Президента Страны Переименован В Министерство*. [online] РИА Новости. Available from: <https://ria.ru/20020911/222760.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹³⁰ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 1993. The Law ‘On Organs of National Security of Turkmenistan’ (№ 4, art.32, with amendments from 1997, 1998 and 2003).

¹³¹ Phone interview with Turkmen security expert on 15 March 2020.

¹³² Turkmenportal. 2020. *Президент Туркменистана Сменил Министра Национальной Безопасности* | Политика. [online] Available from: <https://turkmenportal.com/blog/25131/prezident-turkmenistana-smenil-ministra-nacionalnoi-bezopasnosti> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹³³ Migration.gov.tm. 2018. *Respected President Congratulated Personnel of Ministry of National Security on Professional*

addition, the refocusing of the MNS towards global threats would also demand additional internal structural reforms. In the meantime, the MNS continues to fulfill its traditional functions inherited from the CNS. To this end, enhancing respect for human rights and civil freedoms within the MNS could be further explored. According to Article 5 of the law 'On Organs of National Security', national security agencies must conduct their activities without infringing upon the rights and freedoms of citizens. While, in line with standard practices, citizens' rights and freedoms may be restricted in the interests of national security in cases provided for by law, citizens are able to file complaints against the MNS to the national ombudsman, and appeal to higher national security agencies, the prosecutor's office or courts. The circumstances and cases in which citizens' rights and freedoms may be restricted could also be further explored by national authorities.

2.2. Defence reform

Defence reform is a far-reaching process encompassing an array of inter-related activities. These include assessing the strategic security environment in order to identify the threats, risks and challenges facing a country over the short-to-long term; reviews of the operational roles and objectives of the armed forces and civilian defence-sector institutions; restructuring relations between the defence sector and other security providers, as well as the institutions responsible for the management and oversight of the defence sector; budget reallocations, action plans and reform programmes for the armed forces and defence institutions.

Defence reform in Turkmenistan began in the early 1990s and can be broadly divided into four stages. The first stage covers the period of the creation of the Turkmen Armed Forces, which was shaped by the introduction of the policy of neutrality, Niyazov's reluctance to possess military forces, and Russia's attempt to re-establish military links with the former Soviet republic.

The first period was characterized by the creation of limited armed forces, stationed at former Soviet military bases and under joint operational control with Russia. On 31 July 1992, Turkmenistan signed a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty with Russia that contained several protocols on close cooperation in the military sphere, which led to the formation of a national armed force based on the former 52nd army, composed of 110,000 personnel. Of the 300 formations and units within the 52nd army, 200 were transferred to the command of Turkmenistan, 70 remained under Russia's jurisdiction, and 30 were either withdrawn or demobilized.¹³⁴ The Treaty on Joint Measures signed by Russia and Turkmenistan in July 1992 provided for the Russian Federation as a guarantor of Turkmenistan's security, and made former Soviet army units in the republic the basis for the new national armed forces. The Treaty stipulated that, apart from border troops, air force and air defence units remaining under Russian control, the entire armed forces would be under joint command, and would be gradually devolved to exclusive command by Turkmenistan over a period of ten years. For a transitional period of five years, Russia would provide logistical support and remunerate Turkmenistan for the right to maintain special installations in the country, while Turkmenistan would bear the costs of housing, utilities, and administration.¹³⁵

The first military doctrine of Turkmenistan was adopted in 1994 and referred explicitly to the principle of "positive neutrality" as confirmed by UN General Assembly Resolution No. 50/80 on the Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan.¹³⁶ The doctrine defined the main directions for reform and

Holiday. [online] Available from: <http://migration.gov.tm/en/uvazhaemyj-prezident-pozdravil-sotrudnikov-ministerstva-natsionalnoj-bezopasnosti-s-professionalnym-prazdnikom-2/> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹³⁴ Belosludtsev, O., Gribovsky, A. 2002. *Russia's Military-Political Relations with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <http://mdb.cast.ru/mdb/3-2002/at/rmpr/> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹³⁵ Turkmenistan Country Study Guide: Strategic Information and Developments. 2012. Washington DC. International Business Publications, Inc. USA.

¹³⁶ Hrlibrary.umn.edu. 1995. *Maintenance of international security, U.N. Doc. A/RES/50/80*. [online] Available from: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/resolutions/50/80GA1995.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

modernization of the armed forces in response to geopolitical challenges stemming from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the Caspian region. This period was marked by a process referred to as 'Turkmenization',¹³⁷ in which the armed forces would gradually establish independent command and control that would allow them to operate autonomously and adhere to the politics of neutrality. During this period, Turkmenistan lacked professional military officers, while reports suggest some were engaged in the illegal arms trade.¹³⁸ The majority of Russian security forces left Turkmenistan in 1999, with the armed forces in need of substantive modernization.

The aforementioned developments – changes in the regional security environment, the departure of Russian security forces, the weak material basis of the armed forces, and the small amount of attention privileged by leaders to the military establishment – drove the second defence reform process. However, as a measure of President Niyazov's commitment to neutrality, very limited investment in the armed forces was made during this period.¹³⁹ In this context, it is important to note the impact of the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, which placed Turkmenistan in a difficult position between the need to maintain neutrality, but also to respond effectively to the growing number of incidents along its border with Afghanistan. Moreover, Turkmen authorities worked hard to maintain diplomatic relations and communication with the Taliban throughout the Afghan conflict. During this period, very modest modernization and procurement processes were undertaken, normally funded in exchange for natural gas.¹⁴⁰

The third phase of the defence reform began after the accession of Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov to the position of president of Turkmenistan in 2006. Immediately after his inauguration, President Berdymukhamedov made moderate efforts to open up Turkmenistan's economy to international markets, and reverse some elements of the strategy of international isolation followed in previous years.¹⁴¹ In the context of the defence sector, and in contrast to the previous leadership, he placed heavy emphasis on the modernization and reform of the armed forces. This was illustrated in the 2009 Military Doctrine of Turkmenistan. At a meeting of the State Security Council on 24 May 2009, the president underlined that "our current task is to bring modern world standards to reinforce our Armed Forces and to create appropriate conditions for the service and life of the military". He ordered officials to immediately solve problems pertaining to affordable housing for military families while emphasizing that "Turkmenistan has been and remains committed to the principles of the defence doctrine, based on the policy of neutrality, openness and good-neighborly relations."¹⁴²

On 30 August 2009, the Law 'On the Status and Social Protection of the Military Personnel and Members of their Families' was adopted, which included a number of socio-economic guarantees for military personnel.¹⁴³ Turkmen expert Atamurat Dzhumayev noted that "under Niyazov, the neutral status [of Turkmenistan] served as a reason for refusing to rearm; Turkmenbashi did not want to spend money on the army, which led to the degradation of the armed forces. The new President [Berdymukhamedov] treats the army differently. The proximity to unstable Afghanistan and unresolved territorial and administrative disputes with Uzbekistan forced the Turkmen government

¹³⁷ In early 1993 about 95 percent of all officers serving in Turkmenistan were representatives of the Slav nations, or came from other republics of the CIS. In *Turkmenistan's Military Co-operation and Foreign Relations with Russia*. [online] Available from: https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/14320/10/10_chapter%203.pdf [Accessed 11 March 2020].

¹³⁸ Алексеев А., 2002. *Вооруженные Силы Туркменистана*. [online] Cast.3ebra.com. Available from: http://cast.3ebra.com/journal/2002/3_2002turkmen/ [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹³⁹ Phone interview with international security expert on 11 March 2020.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Gelfgat V., 2014. *Source: Connections*, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp.1-20.

¹⁴² ТАСС. 2007. Президент Туркменистана объявил о военной реформе и создании МЧС.

¹⁴³ Ilo.org. 2009. *Turkmenistan - Law No. 62-IV of 30 August 2009 'On the Status of the Military and Social Protection of Their Families'*. [online] Available from: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=fr&p_isn=84133&p_country=TKM&p_classification=22 [Accessed 21 April 2020].

to start military reforms.”¹⁴⁴ In this context, the military doctrine indicates the priorities for the development of the armed forces and other troops, including reforms in the management system, enhanced combat readiness, creation of new state and military structures responsible for resource and troop mobilization; and enhanced training. In addition, the doctrine emphasizes the need to improve military infrastructure “to ensure effective operation and repair of arms and military equipment, increase its technical equipment”, as well as the need to develop an industrial base for the production and repair of armaments. In line with its commitment to neutrality, the military doctrine forbids the establishment of foreign military bases in the country, and the participation of the armed forces in foreign operations.

Considering Turkmenistan’s defence and security architecture, its naval force received considerably more attention from political leaders during this period. Sources suggest that this was intended to reinforce Turkmenistan’s Caspian naval capabilities and was demonstrated by the procurement of several Russian and Turkish corvettes and patrol boats.¹⁴⁵ During this stage of defence reform, military spending grew consistently, from \$165 million in 2004, to \$210 million in 2011. In parallel, military personnel numbers were reduced from 200,000 to 50,000, with priority given to the recruitment and training of professional soldiers.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the combat readiness and interoperability of the armed forces remained limited, in part due to the very limited amount of regular training and exercises. For example, in 2012 the Turkmen Armed Forces held their first publicly announced, the Khazar-2012 tactical exercises. President Berdymukhamedov noted that all exercises took place within the territory of Turkmenistan, and stated that its purpose was to improve the combat readiness of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan. He also noted that the exercises focused on naval capabilities, and that it was held in strict compliance with the military doctrine adopted in 2009.¹⁴⁷

Despite attempts to improve combat readiness, issues remained, including those related to outdated Soviet military infrastructure and weapons storage facilities. On 7 July 2011, a massive blast occurred at a military warehouse in the Turkmen city of Abadan. According to government officials, two military personnel died in the blast, along with 13 civilians, with nearby houses and infrastructure damaged.¹⁴⁸ In response, the Minister of Defence, Gugondyev, was demoted to the rank of colonel. However, beyond this measure, very limited information exists as to what other actions were taken to avoid such incidents in the future.

The fourth and most recent stage of defence reform in Turkmenistan can be associated with the adoption of the 2016 Military Doctrine of Turkmenistan. While the text is not publicly available, sources suggest its adoption was mostly likely in reaction to challenges in Turkmenistan’s regional security environment, most notably, the challenges posed by the rise of the Islamic State and uncertainties in Afghanistan and the Caspian region. In the context of Afghanistan, NATO’s troop draw-down, beginning in 2015, coincided with increasing instability in the country, particularly along the Afghan-Turkmen frontier zone in the north of the country. In 2015 and 2016 in Afghanistan’s Faryab province, which borders Turkmenistan, Afghan security forces struggled to contain a resurgence of infighting. Since that period, the Taliban has also been increasingly active in Afghanistan’s Jowzjan, Badghis, and Herat provinces – all of which also border Turkmenistan.¹⁴⁹ At the end of April 2015, the

¹⁴⁴ delfi.lv. 2009. *Туркменистан Принял Новую Военную Доктрину*. [online] Available from: <https://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/abroad/turkmenistan-prinyal-novuyu-voennuyu-doktrinu.d?id=23028372&all=true> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁴⁵ Gelfgat, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Кочоян Д., 2015. *Изоляция От Внешнего Мира - Не Изоляция От Внешних Угроз: Вооруженные Силы Туркменистана В Цифрах*. [online] iarex.ru. Available from: <https://iarex.ru/articles/51975.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁴⁷ Global Security. 2016. *Turkmenistan Military Spending*. [online] Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-budget.htm> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹⁴⁸ Interfax.ru. 2011. *Туркменские Власти Признали Гибель При Взрывах В Абадане 15 Человек*. [online] Available from: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/198573> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁴⁹ Stronski, P., 2017. *Turkmenistan at Twenty-Five: The High Price of Authoritarianism*. [online] Carnegieendowment.

Taliban announced a spring offensive against government forces. Throughout May and June of the same year there were regular reports of violent clashes between the Taliban and Afghanistan forces in the provinces neighbouring Herat and Badghis.¹⁵⁰ Admittedly, Turkmenistan had maintained friendly relations with Afghanistan, even during the Taliban regime, allowing diplomatic presence, accepting refugees, and continuing to deliver electricity and humanitarian assistance. These reasons likely explain why an open confrontation with the Taliban has not emerged.¹⁵¹ Under the aegis of the UN, in 1999 Turkmen authorities facilitated negotiations between the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan, inviting the forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud and the Taliban to come together.¹⁵² However, the emergence of the Islamic State, and the growing threat from radical Islamist non-state actors, may well have impacted Turkmenistan's reassessment of the security threats and challenges it faced, and thus led to the adoption of the 2016 Military Doctrine.

President Berdymukhamedov stated that the new Doctrine was created "in order to increase the defence power". The secretary of the State Security Council, and former defense minister of Turkmenistan, Yaylym Berdiev, emphasized that practical steps were being taken to strengthen Turkmenistan's defence power, including "modernization of the material and technical base of all branches of the armed forces".¹⁵³ Although the text is classified, interviews with and statements by top Turkmen officials indicate that three priorities underpin the Doctrine.¹⁵⁴ First, the modernization of the army and improved material-technical base of the national forces and their equipment. Second, the improvement of living conditions for military personnel and their families, as well as the provision of advanced training for military specialists. Finally, enhancing Turkmenistan's ability to respond to new and emerging security threats stemming from technological advancements, and the introduction of digitalization and modern technologies into the structure of the armed forces. These priority lines clearly indicate the need for further investment in human resources. While the role of the minister of defence has remained relatively stable, shared by Yaylym Berdiev (2009–2011 and 2015–2018) and Begench Gundogdiev (2011–2015, 2018–present), recent reports suggest that the latter has fallen out of favour. On 22 January 2020, President Berdymukhamedov issued a warning to Minister of Defence Begench Gundogdiev for alleged poor performance of official duties, shortcomings in his work, and demanded that corrections be made immediately.¹⁵⁵

Further defence reforms could be influenced by current developments in the region. On 18 December 2019, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev stated that "militants" were consolidating positions in Northern Afghanistan and were preparing to invade Central Asia through Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Based on this threat, and falling gas prices, which have harmed Ashgabat's ability to procure modern armaments, Turkmenistan has renewed its military and political cooperation with Russia. This is exemplified by the recent meeting between the deputies of their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs on 4 February 2020 in Ashgabat.¹⁵⁶

org. Available from: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Stroński_Turkmenistan.pdf [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁵⁰ Gusev, L., 2016. *Territorial Defence Problems of Turkmenistan*. Available from: http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-597d4ba6-e4d1-4220-899b-f11626515038/c/AP.VII_Gusev_.pdf

¹⁵¹ Phone interview with Svetlana Dzardanova on 11 March 2020.

¹⁵² Мирзеханов В., Тулпаков М., 2018. *Доктрина позитивного нейтралитета и внешнеполитические приоритеты постсоветской Туркмении*.

¹⁵³ Turkmenistan.gov.tm. 2019. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=17981> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁵⁴ Turkmenistan.gov.tm. 2020. *Новый Номер Журнала «Национальная Армия»: История, Преемственность, Цифровизация*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=20235> [Accessed 21 April 2020];

Gundogar-news.com. 2016. *Военная Реформа В Действии | Общество | Гундогар*. [online] Available from: http://gundogar-news.com/index.php?category_id=3&news_id=8914 [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁵⁵ Turkmenistan.gov.tm. 2020. *Новый Номер Журнала «Национальная Армия»: История, Преемственность, Цифровизация*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=20235> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁵⁶ Ng.ru. 2020. *Туркменистан Укрепляет Границу С Афганистаном*. [online] Available from: http://www.ng.ru/cis/2020-02-11/5_7791_turkmenistan.html [Accessed 21 April 2020].

2.3. Police reform

Security agencies responsible for upholding the rule of law need to be structured in a way that allows them to adapt to the changing security needs and expectations of the communities they serve. It is these changes in perceived and real security needs that often drive police reform, as well as broader changes in the local, national and international context.¹⁵⁷ In the 1990s in Central Asia, the provision of internal security was primarily carried out by successors to the Soviet Internal Affairs Ministry — the police or militsiya. By the early 21st century, remarkably little had changed, reflecting a broader continuity in policing policy and structures across the wider post-Soviet space.¹⁵⁸ Turkmen militsiya inherited the roles, functions and working methods of their Soviet predecessors. Although renamed the National Police of Turkmenistan in 1998, little changed in terms of mentality and working culture.¹⁵⁹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) was one of the cornerstone institutions for the former president Niyazov, who emphasized its role in domestic affairs and internal security. This was linked to his reluctance to support and further invest in the Armed Forces. By early 2007, President Berdymukhamedov had taken a series of steps in an attempt to reform his law enforcement agencies, including dismissing ministers, reshuffling staff and responsibilities, and establishing a police complaints commission. The MIA was relieved of responsibility for guarding important military and civilian facilities, but powers related to traffic policing were transferred back to it. Internal Affairs Minister, Akmamed Rahmanov, who held the post prior to 2006, was dismissed, and ministry staff began going through an appraisal system with some assigned to new posts. The changes continued into the autumn of 2007.¹⁶⁰

On 8 October 2007, the president convened a meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and stated that “it’s as if the winds of change haven’t even touched the Internal Affairs Ministry, where levels of accountability, competence and rigour have fallen lower than ever”. In the course of the meeting, representatives including the new minister of internal affairs, Khodjamyrat Annagurbanov, were reported to have debated the nature and severity of crimes committed within the MIA. Turkmenistan’s Chief Prosecutor Muhammetguly Ogshukov read out a statement of abuses and misconduct carried out by the minister, including allegations of taking bribes and fabricating criminal cases. It was reported that some crimes were committed upon the direct instructions of the former minister, Annagurbanov, who reportedly instructed officials to hide evidence which could criminally implicate his own nephew.¹⁶¹ In the same year, chiefs of police in the capital Ashgabat and in the northern Dashoguz region were also dismissed on account of “serious shortcomings” in their performance.¹⁶²

In recognition of the need to improve basic and in-service training for police officers, President Berdymukhamedov opened a new police academy on 31 August 2009. In addition, dialogue in 2008 with the EU regarding the possibility of prison inspections by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and participation of Turkmenistan in the EU’s Central Asia Drug Action Programme began, with training courses offered on the treatment of incarcerated drug addicts.¹⁶³ The MIA has undergone some structural changes and has been reinforced with new competencies. For example, in 2016 the State Security Service of Public Health that deals with combating illicit drug trafficking was transferred to the MIA. Similarly, the State Service of Turkmenistan for Combating Economic Crimes became a part of the MIA in 2019.

¹⁵⁷ https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF_BG_16_Police%20Reform_0.pdf

¹⁵⁸ Lewis D., 2011. *Security Sector Reform in authoritarian regimes: The OSCE experience of police assistance programming in Central Asia*. Security and Human Rights, Volume 22 (2): 103.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Turkmen security expert on 3 March 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Institute for War & Peace Reporting. n.d. *Turkmen Police Reforms Insufficient*. [online] Available from: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/turkmen-police-reforms-insufficient> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶¹ Turkmenistan.ru. 2007. *Число Жалоб Граждан Туркменистана На Правоохранительные Органы Возросло Вдвое | Интернет-Газета Turkmenistan.Ru*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/19410> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶² Institute for War & Peace Reporting. n.d. *Turkmen Police Reforms Insufficient*.

¹⁶³ Denison, M., *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities*, 2010. P.49.

Nevertheless, the progress of police reform in Turkmenistan remains modest, and as such demands further analysis. On the one hand, modernization and digitalization processes have been made across the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which may go some way to improving the efficiency and working practices of law enforcement bodies.¹⁶⁴ Increased cooperation with international organizations also demonstrates the interests of Turkmenistan in improving the performance and technical capacity of law enforcement bodies. In 2019, under the framework of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Programme for Central Asia, the UNODC Programme Office in Turkmenistan provided support to forensic laboratories belonging to the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan to develop their capacities, so as to achieve accreditation according to the international ISO 17025 standard.¹⁶⁵ The MIA also participates in the Border Management in Central Asia Programme (BOMCA), aimed at enhancing security, combatting illegal trafficking and facilitating trade. The latest BOMCA phase, to which Turkmenistan is a beneficiary, focuses on strengthening institutional capacities and enhancing professional skills.¹⁶⁶ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) also has an extensive programme of cooperation with Turkmen law enforcement agencies. For example, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat organized a series of lectures on codes of conduct and ethical standards in law enforcement in 2019. The Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Border Institute of the State Border Service of Turkmenistan each hosted a programme of lectures.¹⁶⁷

On the other hand, however, reform processes remain blurred and opaque, illustrated by recent criminal cases involving high ranking MIA officials. In October 2019, the ex-minister of internal affairs of Turkmenistan, and former police lieutenant general, Isgender Mulikov, confessed to corruption and abuse of power. At a meeting of the State Security Council of Turkmenistan, Prosecutor General Batyr Atdayev informed President Berdymukhamedov of results of the criminal case against Mulikov under the articles "Corruption" and "Abuse". The leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was then entrusted to Mammetkhan Chakiyev, who previously held the post of deputy prime minister for industry, transport and communications.¹⁶⁸

Enhanced international cooperation, modest modernization programmes, and the removal of officials accused of corruption, suggests some level of reform is underway in the Turkmen law enforcement domain. In 2020, the Minister of Internal Affairs M. Chakiyev reported on the work of subordinate divisions in the first quarter of the year, as well as on the practical steps being taken to prevent crime, road accidents, and ensure fire safety in all regions of the country. At the same meeting, the president instructed that the priority should be given to maintaining public order and observing the rule of law.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Phone interview with international security expert on 12 March 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Unodc.org. 2020. *UNODC Conducts the first Training for Turkmen Forensic Experts on Quality Management in line with ISO/IEC 17025*. [online] Available from: <https://www.unodc.org/centralasia/en/news/unodc-conducts-the-first-training-for-turkmen-forensic-experts-on-quality-management-in-line-with-iso-iec-17025.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶⁶ Bomca-eu.org. n.d. *Background*. [online] Available from: <https://www.bomca-eu.org/en/programme/background> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶⁷ Osce.org. 2019. *OSCE-organized lecture series on ethics in law enforcement takes place in Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <https://www.osce.org/centre-in-ashgabat/436355> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶⁸ «СНГ СЕГОДНЯ.» 2019. *Экс-Министр Внутренних Дел Туркменистана Признался В Коррупции*. [online] Available from: https://sng.today/ashkhabad/11826-jeks-ministr-vnutrennih-del-turkmenistana-prznalsja-v-korruptcii.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fyandex.ru%2Fnews [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁶⁹ Заседание Госсовета безопасности: итоги двух месяцев года. 2020. [online] Available from: <https://cci.gov.tm/ajax/news.php?ID=2343>

3. Security sector oversight: mechanisms and procedures

The word 'oversight' is not explicitly mentioned in the law 'On National Security', the law 'On the State Security Council', the law 'On Military Obligations and Military Service', or the law 'On the Status of Military Servicemen'.¹⁷⁰ The Constitution of Turkmenistan only mentions oversight twice in Section VI, Article 129, when referring to the functions of the prosecutor general of Turkmenistan: "Oversight of accurate and uniform compliance with the laws of Turkmenistan, of activities of the President of Turkmenistan, the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan, of resolutions of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, is entrusted to the Prosecutor General of Turkmenistan and prosecutors that are subordinate to him. The prosecutor participates in the consideration of cases in the courts on the grounds and in the manner established by law".¹⁷¹ The previous law on the police does not mention oversight either. Instead, Article 24 mentions the role of the president of Turkmenistan in determining the nature of control over the actions of the police: "Control over the activities of the police is carried out in the manner determined by the President of Turkmenistan." It also reiterates the role of the general prosecutor.¹⁷² The law 'On Organs of National Security' has two articles on oversight (Articles 28 and 29).¹⁷³ There is no mention of oversight in laws on border guards and customs control.

3.1 Legislative oversight¹⁷⁴

The Mejlis plays an important role in the legislative process. Article 16 of the law 'On the Mejlis' specifies that the parliament adopts the constitution and laws, amends them and oversees their implementation and interpretation, determines the compliance of normative legal acts with the constitution, and ratifies and denounces international treaties.¹⁷⁵ According to Article 6 of the law 'On the Mejlis', the Mejlis may not transfer to another body the right to issue laws on adoption of, or amendments to, the Constitution of Turkmenistan, criminal and administrative legislation, and legal proceedings; legislation in the security domain is not given the same status. Interlocutors approached for this study hinted that it is general practice for draft security sector legislation to be prepared by security ministries and the presidential office, with the Mejlis simply acting to endorse them.¹⁷⁶

The Mejlis examines draft laws in the security domain through internal debates. A 2017 report released by the government's state information agency noted that the draft law of Turkmenistan 'On Combating Terrorism' was submitted to parliamentarians for consideration. As underlined by members of parliament (MPs) in the same report, ensuring peace, stability and security is the ultimate aim of Turkmen foreign policy, with such considerations guiding the legislative agenda of President Berdymukhamedov. Evidence put forward in this regard includes the international initiatives of Turkmenistan, including the consolidation of international efforts to combat serious threats to humanity, such as terrorism.¹⁷⁷ Parliamentarians also reportedly considered the draft law 'On the Status of Servicemen', noting that consistent work was carried out in the country to strengthen the material and technical base of the armed forces. As part of the implementation of large-scale military reform, special attention was paid to the training of

¹⁷⁰ Laws available online from: <http://www.milligosun.gov.tm/sahypa/harby-hukuk>

¹⁷¹ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2016. Available from: <http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=11808>

¹⁷² <http://infoabad.com/zakonodatelstvo-turkmenistana/zakon-turkmenistana-o-polici-turkmenistana.html>

¹⁷³ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2012. The law 'On Organs of National Security' (with amendments from 2018 and 2020). Available from: https://base.spininform.ru/show_doc.fwx?rgn=56409

¹⁷⁴ Jasutis G., Steyne R., 2020. *Parliamentary oversight in the security sector: Turkmenistan*, in *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: Case Studies from Central Asia*. Available from: <https://dcf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/DCAF%20Parliamentary%20Oversight%20Jan%202020%20web.pdf>

¹⁷⁵ Available from: http://www.minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc_view.php?doc_id=6433 [Accessed in August 2019].

¹⁷⁶ Anonymous phone interview with diplomat from Ashgabat, on 15 July 2019.

¹⁷⁷ Turkmenistan Today, 2017. *Laws adopted by the Mejlis reflect the priorities of state policy of Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/tm/articles.aspx&article10206&cat11>

qualified military personnel, as well as the creation of favourable conditions for the completion of successful service duty, a healthy life and recovery for 'defenders of the Fatherland'.¹⁷⁸

In March 2017, amendments to the law 'On Border Guards' were also discussed,¹⁷⁹ although it remains unclear if any changes were proposed by the Mejlis, and if so, whether these were incorporated into the final revision of the said law. In a June 2019 session, MPs also considered draft laws 'On amending the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan', as well as several laws regarding the Adalat of Turkmenistan. In November 2019, MPs also considered draft laws to the criminal code of Turkmenistan again, as well as 'On amending the Criminal Procedure Code of Turkmenistan', 'On amendments to the Code of Turkmenistan on Administrative Offences', 'On Amending Turkmenistan's Law on Turkmenistan's Internal Affairs Act', and 'On Amending the Law on Customs Service'.¹⁸⁰

Article 11 of the law 'On the Mejlis' provides for the parliament to examine questions related to approval of the state budget of Turkmenistan and reports on its implementation.¹⁸¹ The budget is prepared by the Ministry of Finance, and after a governmental review, is submitted by the president to the Mejlis. On 24 November 2017, the Mejlis approved the national budget for 2018, with predicted revenues of 95.5 billion manats, and expenses of approximately the same amount (which, using Turkmenistan's official exchange rate, amounts to \$27.29 billion).¹⁸² In late 2018, a national budget of 83.8 billion manats was approved for 2019, while on 2 December 2019, the Mejlis discussed the possible implementation of the 2020 budget, and approved reported revenues of 84.39 billion manats, and expenses of 84.29 billion manats.¹⁸³ There is, however, no public information concerning debates or amendments regarding the adoption of the budget. Interviews with Turkmen interlocutors suggest that despite the role of the Mejlis in reviewing and approving state budgets, MPs as a rule vote in their favour.¹⁸⁴ The defence budget is not publicly announced, although the most recently available information suggests that the total defence budget ranges from \$200 million to \$719 million.¹⁸⁵ It is not clear, however, whether this is part of the state budget, and therefore reviewed by the Mejlis or not.

The Mejlis structure does not include any committee or commission responsible for national defence and security.¹⁸⁶ Unsurprisingly, parliamentary oversight in the security domain remains rather limited. The Parliamentary Committee on the Protection of Human Rights and Liberties is the only known oversight body to exist within the Mejlis, although it does not focus exclusively on the security sector.

¹⁷⁸ Turkmenistan Today, 2017. *Laws adopted by the Mejlis reflect the priorities of state policy of Turkmenistan*. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/tm/articles.aspx&article10206&cat11>

¹⁷⁹ Turkmenistan Golden Age, 2017. *Members of the national parliament pass new laws and elect Ombudsman*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=13213>

¹⁸⁰ Turkmenportal. 2019. *Парламент Туркменистана Принял Госбюджет-2020 И Ряд Новых Законов | Политика*. [online] Available from: <https://turkmenportal.com/blog/23479/parlament-turkmenistana-prinyal-gosbyudzheta-2020-i-ryad-novyh-zakonov> [Accessed 22 April 2020].

¹⁸¹ Available from: http://www.minjust.gov.tm/ru/mmerkezi/doc_view.php?doc_id=6433 [Accessed in August 2019].

¹⁸² RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. 2017. *Turkmenistan's Bogus Budget*. [online] Available from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/turkmenistan-bogus-budget/28892094.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁸³ «СНГ СЕГОДНЯ.» 2018. *Меджлис Туркменистана Принял Госбюджет Страны На 2019 Год*. [online] Available from: <https://sng.today/ashkhabad/8509-medzhlis-turkmenistana-prinjal-gosbyudzheta-strany-na-2019-god.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020]; EADaily. 2017. *Доходы Госбюджета Туркмении В 2018 Году Снижены На 7,8%*. [online] Available from: <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2017/11/27/dohody-gosbyudzheta-turkmenii-v-2018-godu-snizheny-na-78> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

¹⁸⁴ Anonymous interview with representative of the Turkmen diaspora, on 11 July 2019.

¹⁸⁵ IISS, "The Military Balance 2016", pp.185–207, estimates the 2014 Turkmen defence budget as \$719 million. Although these numbers are outdated, 2014 is the last year the IISS published budget numbers for all five Central Asian Republics. Other sources estimate the defence budget as substantially lower, at \$200 million. Global Security. 2016. *Turkmenistan Military Spending*. Available from: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/turkmen-budget.htm>; Gorenburg, D., 2014. *External Support for Central Asian Military and Security Forces*. Working Paper, SIPRI & OSF, p.13. Available from: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI-OSFno1WP.pdf>; Khrolenko, A., 2019.

¹⁸⁶ Turkmenistan Golden Age, 2018. *Heads of parliamentary committees appointed*. Available from: <http://turkmenistan.gov.tm/?id=15978>

Article 16 of the law 'On the Mejlis' explains that the parliament approves the programme of activities of the Cabinet of Ministers. It does not exclude the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other governmental agencies linked to security and military affairs. This means that, as a minimum, the Mejlis can access the programme of activities carried out by security actors and might debate it. Such questions are extensively discussed within the State Security Council, led by the president, which provides an opportunity for ministerial bodies to update the president on the conduct of the security agencies under their control. While in 2018 no direct references were made to the role of the Mejlis in overseeing security actors, the president did order the monitoring of discipline among military and law enforcement personnel, but did not specify which institution should be responsible for this.¹⁸⁷ Despite the absence of established oversight structures within the Mejlis, reports suggest that the periodic removal of senior security officials acts as a deterrent against ill-treatment at the hands of the security services, in particular against non-Turkmen service personnel.¹⁸⁸ This has been linked to a reported decrease, since 2007, in cases of discrimination against non-Turkmen or mixed-ethnicities service personnel in the upper echelons of the security sector.¹⁸⁹

According to Article 16 of the law 'On the Mejlis', the parliament considers, on the proposal of the president of Turkmenistan, the appointment and dismissal of the chair of the supreme court of Turkmenistan, the prosecutor general of Turkmenistan, the minister of internal affairs of Turkmenistan, and the minister of Adalat of Turkmenistan. While this provides the Mejlis with some authority regarding appointments to key ministerial posts, the final decision rests with the president. For example, in June 2018, the president reshuffled key ministerial positions, appointing a new head to the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry of Defence, and the State Border Guard Service.¹⁹⁰ Later, in December 2018, the president also appointed the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Akhmet Khodzатов.¹⁹¹ No information was provided as to whether his candidacy was discussed in the Mejlis. In February 2020, President Berdymukhamedov also made personnel changes in the leadership of the Ministry of National Security of Turkmenistan. Linked with the transfer to another job, the head of state dismissed Major General Yaylim Berdiev from the post of minister of national security of Turkmenistan. Colonel Gurbanmyrat Annaev, who previously held the post of deputy head of this ministry, was appointed the new minister of national security of Turkmenistan.¹⁹² Again, no information was provided as to whether his candidacy was discussed in the Mejlis. The same trend can be observed in the judiciary when, in 2017, the prosecutor general and at least nine other prosecutors were fired and subsequently arrested on corruption charges.¹⁹³ It was not clear if his successor was discussed in the Mejlis. Beyond elective functions, the president also has the power to unilaterally establish state bodies with law enforcement powers, such as the State Service for Combating Economic Crimes, created in 2017 and tasked with preventing and investigating corruption-related offences.¹⁹⁴

According to Article 16 of the law 'On the Mejlis', the parliament is entrusted with examining issues related to peace and security, and the main direction for the domestic and foreign policy of Turkmenistan. While the parliament has discussed a number of amendments to – and adoptions of – laws gov-

¹⁸⁷ Ministry of Adalat of Turkmenistan, 2019. *The results of the activities of law enforcement agencies for 6 months of the year were considered at a meeting of the State Security Council*. Available from: http://www.minjust.gov.tm/ru/php/habar.php?news_id=659

¹⁸⁸ *Security Sector Reform in Central Asia: Exploring Needs and Possibilities*, p.52.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Eurasianet, 2018. *Turkmenistan's president effects radical switch-around of top security officials*. [online] Available from: <https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistans-president-effects-radical-switch-around-of-top-security-officials>

¹⁹¹ Chronicles of Turkmenistan, 2018. *Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs appointed head of Mary Police*. [online] Available from: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2018/12/zamestitelem-ministra-vnutrennih-del-naznachen-glava-politsii-maryi/>

¹⁹² Turkmenportal. 2020. *Президент Туркменистана Сменил Министра Национальной Безопасности*. [online] Available from: <https://turkmenportal.com/blog/25131/prezident-turkmenistana-smenil-ministra-nacionalnoi-bezopasnosti> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

¹⁹³ *Freedom in the World 2018: Turkmenistan*.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

erning the security sector, it is not known whether citizens are consulted or involved in parliamentary processes pertaining to the security sector. It is therefore difficult to assess whether the parliament is able to effectively represent the interests and security needs of its citizens and ensure that these are translated into policies.

3.2 Executive oversight

As the head of state and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Turkmenistan, President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov exerts tight control over the security and defence apparatuses of Turkmenistan.¹⁹⁵ As the ultimate authority responsible for appointing ministers, justice officials, commanders of the armed forces, and approving national military doctrines, President Berdymukhamedov's authority over national security and defence structures extends to all aspects of security provision, management and oversight.¹⁹⁶ He forms and presides over the State Security Council, and submits the budget to the Mejlis for consideration. This competence is enshrined in the Constitution of Turkmenistan and specialized laws regulating security services. For example, according to Article 1 of the law 'On Organs of National Security', the national security agencies of Turkmenistan are special bodies within the structure of state governance, subordinate to the president of Turkmenistan.¹⁹⁷ The law on the police of Turkmenistan (Article 8) stipulates that the police are managed by the minister of internal affairs of Turkmenistan, who is appointed and dismissed by the president of Turkmenistan in accordance with the procedure established by the Constitution of Turkmenistan. In the *velayats* and the city of Ashgabat, the police are led by the heads of police departments, who are appointed and dismissed by the president of Turkmenistan.

Intriguingly, the constitution provides for the introduction of an independent commissioner for human rights (ombudsperson). The parliament, therefore, adopted the Ombudsperson Act in 2016, which established the mandate and functions of the ombudsperson. Although the ombudsperson enjoys legal immunity, cannot be prosecuted, arrested, or detained for official acts while in office,¹⁹⁸ secondary legislation subjects his/her appointment to presidential approval.¹⁹⁹ This challenges his/her impartiality and independence, and links to the executive office. In January 2017, the Ombudsman Act came into force, with the Mejlis electing a human rights ombudsman in March 2017 – Yazdursun Gurbannazarova – on the proposal of the president.²⁰⁰ The Act also obliged the ombudsperson to submit an annual human rights report to the president and parliament,²⁰¹ the first of which was submitted in June 2018 for the period March 2017 to December 2017.²⁰² According to observers, only 25 of 254 written reports were resolved – although it is unclear which of these relate to the actions of the security forces – while the report did not include substantive human rights recommendations relating to the security sector.²⁰³ In 2018, her office received 985 complaints – 479 in written form, of which 15 (3.1%) related to the activities of security actors.²⁰⁴ No public information was shared on the nature

¹⁹⁵ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2016. Article 68. [online] Available from: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6502/file/Turkmenistan_Constitution_am2016_eng.pdf

¹⁹⁶ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2016. Article 71. [online] Available from: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6502/file/Turkmenistan_Constitution_am2016_eng.pdf

¹⁹⁷ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 1993. The law 'On Organs of National Security of Turkmenistan' (№ 4, art.32, with amendments from 08.08.1997, 15.09.1998, 14.06.2003).

¹⁹⁸ United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2019. *Turkmenistan 2018 Human Rights Report*.

¹⁹⁹ United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015*. Available from: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/>

²⁰⁰ United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, 2019. *Turkmenistan 2018 Human Rights Report*.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ The State News Agency of Turkmenistan, 2019. *Report on the work of the Ombudsperson in Turkmenistan in 2018*. [online] Available from: <http://tdh.gov.tm/news/en/obd.aspx>

and outcomes of these complaints. In 2019, Gurbannazarova's office received 985 complaints, the majority of them on housing issues and disagreement with a wide range of court decisions. According to the report, 16 were resolved. Overall, 150 complaints were received on civil and political rights violations, with 3 complaints being resolved.²⁰⁵

3.3 The role of the prosecution service in oversight

The Constitution of Turkmenistan envisions a great role in overseeing the security services for the prosecution service. Articles 129, 130 and 131 stipulate that the prosecutor general of Turkmenistan and his subordinate prosecutors are responsible for overseeing the exact and standardized application of the laws, presidential and ministerial acts, and resolutions of the Mejlis. The prosecutor's office oversees the legality of operational search activities and criminal investigations. The prosecutor general is seen and heard at State Security Council debates with regard to the activities of security actors. For example, on the evening of 3 December 2019, the former minister of internal affairs, Isgender Mulikov, appeared on national TV in handcuffs, black prison garb and had his head shaven. In a briefing to the president, Prosecutor General Batyr Atdayev explained that Mulikov, who had served as the country's top minister since May 2009, abused his job to take huge bribes and engage in embezzlement. State television showed footage of items purportedly found during searches of Mulikov's property. These included huge stacks of dollar notes and expensive watches and jewellery.²⁰⁶ The general prosecutor's office is also responsible for oversight of the implementation of the law 'On Border Guards' (Article 18).²⁰⁷

The law 'On Prosecution' in Turkmenistan reiterates the above-mentioned article of the Constitution in its Article 3.1. It also mentions that the objective of the general prosecutor's office in Turkmenistan is to: "ensure the rule of law and strengthen the rule of law, consisting in the protection of (...) the rights of state authorities, the control of the Armed Forces and other troops, local government, enterprises, institutions, organizations and public associations".²⁰⁸ It also discusses the linkages between the Ministry of Defence of Turkmenistan and the military prosecutor's office in Article 26, and suggests that upon the receipt of complaints, the military prosecutor's office is authorized to inspect the activities of the Turkmen Armed Forces.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Human Rights Watch. 2020. *Turkmenistan: Events of 2019*. [online] Available from: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/turkmenistan> [Accessed 21 April 2020].

²⁰⁶ Eurasianet. 2019. *Turkmenistan: Interior Minister resurfaces in handcuffs*. [online] Available from: <https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-interior-minister-resurfaces-in-handcuffs> [Accessed 5 May 2020].

²⁰⁷ Eurasianet. 2019. *Turkmenistan: Interior Minister resurfaces in handcuffs*. [online] Available from: <https://eurasianet.org/turkmenistan-interior-minister-resurfaces-in-handcuffs> [Accessed 5 May 2020].

²⁰⁸ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2012. The Law 'On Prosecution'. [online] Available from: <http://www.infoabad.com/zakonodatelstvo-turkmenistana/zakon-turkmenistana-o-prokurature-turkmenistana.html>

²⁰⁹ The Constitution of Turkmenistan. 2012. The Law 'On Prosecution'. [online] Available from: <http://www.infoabad.com/zakonodatelstvo-turkmenistana/zakon-turkmenistana-o-prokurature-turkmenistana.html>

4. Transgressions by security forces

The government of Turkmenistan does not publish crime statistics, and most data comes from informal sources. This calls into question the validity and reliability of external reports and obstructs the ability to systematically assess the scope and types of transgressions that are committed by individuals in the security forces. During the presidency of Niyazov, Turkmen security services were notoriously involved in grave crimes including the resale of confiscated narcotics, illegal imprisonment, torture, etc.²¹⁰ Official Turkmen sources suggest that in 2010–2020, corruption and abuse of power were the major issue in Turkmenistan. Below is a list of senior security officials who have committed crimes and who have been denounced by the government:

Government agency/role	Years in office	Name	Reason for dismissal
Minister of National Security/Minister of Defence	2011–2015 as Minister of National Security, 2015–2018 as Minister of Defence, 2018–2020 as Minister of National Security	Yaylym Berdiev	On 22 January 2020, a severe reprimand was announced “for improper performance of duties, work shortcomings”, resulting in him being relieved of the post of secretary of the State Security Council. On 12 February 2020, he was relieved of his post in the MNS and was transferred to another job. ¹
Minister of Defence/Chief of the State Border Guard Service	March–July 2011 as Chief of the Border Guard Service, 2011–2015 as Minister of Defence, 2016–2017 as Chief of the Border Guard Service, 2018–present as Minister of Defence	Begench Gundogdyev	2011 – lowered in rank for unknown reasons and transferred to the Ministry of Defence. 2017 – lowered to the rank of colonel and reprimanded due to “shortcomings in work”. ²
State Migration Service/Presidential Guard	2015–2017 as head of the Migration Service, 2017–2019 as head of the Presidential Guard	Melis Nobatov	Arrested for corruption and money laundering in December 2019. ³
Ministry of the Interior	2009–2019 as Minister of the Interior	Isgender Mulikov	Dismissed for “serious shortcomings in his work”. He publicly confessed to corruption on TV in December 2019. ⁴

²¹⁰ Turkmenistan.ru. 2002. *Президент Туркменистана признал неудовлетворительной работу руководства КНБ*. [online] Available from: <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/ru/node/14543> [Accessed 20 April 2020].

Prosecutor General	2013–2017 as prosecutor general	Amanmurad Hallyyev	Dismissed for corruption and bribery and arrested in May 2017 together with 50 other members of staff from the prosecutor’s office. ⁵
State Customs Service	2017–present as Chief of the State Customs Service	Atadurdi Osmanov	Reprimanded and lowered in rank in June 2019, for allowing corruption to “flourish in the Customs Service of Turkmenistan”. ⁶

The arrests, detentions and imprisonments of high-ranking officials suggest that security actors can be held accountable for transgressions. Their engagement in corruption schemes however demonstrates an urgent need for significant revision and reinforcement of the principles of integrity and ethics within the security services. Some reports suggest that, for example, security personnel solicit bribes in the course of their official duties to supplement their income, traffic police often target vehicles with commercial (yellow) licence plates for bribes. In October 2019, the prosecutor general referred to several cases of bribery, money extortion and abuse of power conducted by low ranking police officers, which goes to substantiate the above information²¹¹. At this level, one can refer to the commissioner for human rights (ombudsperson) and her report with regard to misconduct and petty crime within the security services. In 2018, her office received 985 complaints – 479 in written form, of which 15 (3.1%) related to the activities of security actors. No public information was shared on the nature and outcomes of these complaints.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the trajectory and progress of security sector reforms in Turkmenistan, beginning in the first section, by identifying the functions and mandates of Turkmenistan’s statutory security providers, and then analysing security sector reforms across the intelligence, defence and law enforcement spheres. The subsequent sections reviewed oversight mechanisms as set out in the constitution and laws of Turkmenistan, and mapped transgressions by Turkmen security actors. This section provides concluding remarks on areas of the security sector which could benefit from further reforms.

Notwithstanding the modest reform processes underway across the Turkmen security sector, there remains a lack of clarity at the strategic level regarding the direction and objectives of such reform processes, as well as the role that oversight bodies play within them. To this end, scope exists for Turkmen authorities to consider:

- **Defining a strategic-level SSR strategy:** while acknowledging the importance of the 2016 Military Doctrine in driving security sector reform processes in Turkmenistan, this document could be supplemented by a strategic-level SSR strategy. Currently, the absence of public SSR concept and strategy papers, and related ministerial guidance, makes the process unclear and to a certain extent, covert. In addition, such a strategic-level SSR reform could help unite the ambitions and aims of sectorial or agency-level reform initiatives, which currently operate in partial isolation from one another. The State Security Council should be assigned as the institution leading reforms of the security sector.

²¹¹ Interview with Turkman security expert on 12 April 2020.

- **Strengthening the oversight role of the Mejlis:** while recognizing the important role the Mejlis play in overseeing the security, additional efforts could be made to involve the Mejlis in oversight processes through, for example, encouraging debates in the Mejlis on reform processes within different security agencies. While acknowledging the particularities and importance of the presidential system, the adoption of a law on parliamentary oversight should identify the role of the Mejlis in oversight of the security sector.
- **Strengthening the role of external oversight agencies and commissions:** in line with Turkmenistan's constitution, the president exercises direct oversight and control over Turkmen security agencies. Beyond strengthening the role of the Mejlis in this process, national authorities might also consider further empowering the newly created ombudsperson, who could consider complaints received against security actors.

Intelligence sector reform

As noted in subsection 2.1. on intelligence section reform, Turkmenistan has made some progress in reforming its intelligence sector, including the removal and disciplining of officials suspected of corruption or unethical behaviour. Further measures include functional changes within the Ministry of National Security (MNS) in order to curtail, and in some cases, remove extraordinary powers which might unduly limit civil freedoms. A reorientation of MNS powers towards external security threats, paving the way for other law enforcement bodies to focus on internal security threats of a criminal nature would remain of immense importance. Notwithstanding these, scope exists for further reform of Turkmenistan's intelligence sector, including:

- **Delineating intelligence versus law enforcement competencies:** as with many countries in the post-Soviet space, Turkmenistan's primary intelligence agency, the MNS, can be described as a hybrid agency, vested with a combination of both law enforcement and intelligence functions. Building on the commitment of the current Turkmen administration to reform its intelligence sector, and in line with best practice in intelligence sector governance, national authorities might explore options such as demilitarization, limits on certain law enforcement powers and on conducting pretrial investigations. The first step in such a process might be to review legislation and regulatory mechanisms regarding the MNS, and to transfer certain powers to other security agencies.
- **Enhancing inter-agency cooperation:** considering the president's comments in 2018 on the need to enhance cooperation between the MNS and other security agencies, mechanisms to strengthen inter-agency cooperation could be further explored. Such coordination may go some way to limit the duplication of investigative processes and ensure a more efficient allocation of human and financial resources, thereby contributing to national security.
- **Reinforcing respect for human rights and the rule of law:** as the primary agency responsible for addressing threats to national security, including international terrorism and extremism, the Ministry of National Security plays an important role in Turkmenistan's overall security architecture. To this end, it is important that in accordance with Article 5 of the Law of Turkmenistan on Organs of National Security, national security agencies carry out their activities in strict compliance with the rights and freedoms of citizens. To this end, national authorities could consider initiatives to enhance respect for human rights within the MNS and make redress for citizens easier to seek. This might include an enhanced role for the ombudsperson of Turkmenistan and clear complaints procedures.

Defence sector reform

Under President Berdymukhamedov, reforms within the defence sector have increased in pace and scope, particularly within the Turkmen Naval Force. However, these have been primarily limited to rearmament, rather than being structural or governance-based reforms. To this end, and in accordance with the findings of this study, Turkmen authorities might consider exploring the following areas:

- **Adapting human resources policy in the armed forces:** armed forces and their supporting bodies should represent the society they serve, as the success of any public organization is defined by its ability to harness diversity of thought, skills and talents within society. Further investment in human resources management, and particularly merit-based recruitment processes, could form part of such a strategy.
- **Improving conditions of service and ethical behaviour in the armed forces:** while in recent years, Turkmen authorities have procured a wide array of new armaments for the armed forces and its supporting bodies, only modest efforts have been made to improve the conditions of service for personnel, particularly conscripts. To this end, Turkmen authorities might consider exploring strategies to improve basic and in-service training, as well as the living conditions of military personnel. Ethics in the armed forces should become an important element that would harness national and international efforts. The establishment of an Ethics Board and subsequent legislation related to the integrity of the defence system would be a welcome step forward. Further efforts could be made to make the complaints process more transparent, by providing information on the nature and outcomes of complaints within the armed forces. The international community could also support such efforts through the International Conference of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces, a non-partisan advisory forum, open to states without dedicated military ombudspersons, such as Turkmenistan.
- **Strengthening physical security stockpile management practices:** while reports into the 2011 arms depot explosion in Abadan vary as regards the number of casualties,²¹² beyond the demotion of the then minister of defence, Gugondyev, very little information exists as to the approach taken by Turkmen authorities to avoid such an incident in the future. To this end, Turkmen authorities might consider strengthening physical security stockpile and management practices through enhanced engagement with the international community.

Law enforcement reform

The Turkmen security sector privileges law enforcement functions to a wide variety of agencies. Given that law enforcement bodies are generally the most visible of all government agencies, and therefore crucial to building confidence and trust between the state and citizens, Turkmen authorities might consider exploring the following areas:

- **Strengthening integrity and professional working practices:** while Turkmen authorities have made efforts to modernize and professionalize working practices within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Police of Turkmenistan, partly through the removal of senior officials accused of corruption, the opening of a dedicated police academy, and substantial engagement with the international community, scope does exist for further

²¹² Smallarmssurvey.org. 2020. *Small Arms Survey - Unplanned Explosions at Munitions Sites*. [online] Available from: <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/weapons-and-markets/stockpiles/unplanned-explosions-at-munitions-sites.html> [Accessed 21 April 2020]; Interfax.ru. 2011. *Туркменские Власти Признали Гибель При Взрывах В Абадане 15 Человек*. [online] Available from: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/198573> [Accessed 21 April 2020].



reforms. This is exemplified by ongoing reports of corruption and bribery across law enforcement structures. Turkmen authorities might therefore consider devising a strategic-level police reform strategy, with a focus on building individual and organizational integrity across law enforcement bodies. A first step in such a process might be the implementation of an integrity plan, which would systemically identify corruption-prone and high-risk corruption areas for law enforcement. A broader police reform strategy could then be developed based on these findings, which would also focus on merit-based recruitment processes, internal control measures, and stringent vetting procedures.

- **Introducing community policing principles:** while Turkmen law enforcement bodies have extensive engagement with the international community on police training, including in the area of community policing, no known community policing concept exists. While the concept of community policing remains contested, consensus exists that such an approach can be instrumental in building ties with local communities, and by extension, trust in law enforcement bodies.
- **Modernizing law enforcement equipment:** as the most visible apparatus of law enforcement organs, the traffic police play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and building trust with communities. In order to do so, however, law enforcement bodies require modernized equipment, and training in the latest working practices. To this end, the international assistance community could consider engaging with Turkmen authorities in this area, with a view to opening dialogue for broader law enforcement reforms.

DCAF Geneva Centre
for Security Sector
Governance
20TH ANNIVERSARY

DCAF Geneva
P.O. Box 1360
CH-1211 Geneva 1
Switzerland
Tel: +41 (22) 730 94 00
Email: info@dcaf.ch

DCAF Brussels
/ EU SSG Facility
24 Avenue des Arts (boîte 8)
1000 Brussels
Belgium

DCAF Ljubljana
Gospodinjska ulica 8
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia

DCAF Ramallah
Al-Maaref Street 34
Ramallah / Al-Bireh
West Bank, Palestine

DCAF Beirut
Gefinor Bloc C
Office 604, Ras Beirut
Lebanon

DCAF Tunis
Rue Ibn Zohr 14
1082 Tunis
Tunisia