

Country Report on Terrorism 2023 - Chapter 1 - Turkmenistan

Overview: The Government of Turkmenistan (GoTM) continued its efforts to improve the capacity of law enforcement agencies to counter terrorism, ensure border security, and detect terrorist financing in 2023. Turkmenistan actively cooperates with international organizations and participates in the C5+1 diplomatic platform with the United States to prevent violent extremism and counter international terrorism. GoTM authorities maintain close surveillance on the country's population and its borders. GoTM law enforcement officials participated in training organized by the U.S. government.

2023 Terrorist Incidents: There were no terrorist incidents reported in Turkmenistan in 2023.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: There were no significant changes in 2023. In September, President Serdar Berdimuhamedov approved a plan to increase international counterterrorism cooperation between the Turkmen government and international organizations and other countries. Turkmenistan's law to combat terrorism assigns CT functions to the Presidential Security Service, State Migration Service, State Border Service, State Customs Service, the Financial Monitoring Service of the Ministry of Finance and Economy, and the Ministries of National Security, Internal Affairs, and Defense.

Turkmenistan law bans "religious fanaticism and extremism or actions aimed at antagonizing and aggravating relations or inciting enmity between different religious organizations." It allows for the liquidation of a religious organization for "extremist activities" and bans the production, import, and distribution of literature that contains ideas of "religious extremism."

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Turkmenistan is a member of the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. Its Financial Intelligence Unit, the Financial Monitoring Service of the Ministry of Finance and Economy, is a member of the Egmont Group.

In 2023, Turkmenistan completed its mutual evaluation, which noted that competent authorities adequately understood and assessed the terrorist financing (TF) risks, but that law enforcement agencies did not fully understand the risks of using new technologies for TF purposes. Turkmenistan, the report further noted, has established and operates a system for targeted financial sanctions (TFS), but the existing practice of list dissemination to the financial institutions and designated nonfinancial businesses and professions, as well as the application of appropriate measures, does not fully ensure the application of the TFS without delay.

Countering Violent Extremism: The GoTM continued to implement the Joint Plan of Action to Combat Terrorism and Prevent Violent Extremism with other Central Asian countries. Turkmenistan has almost 100 FTFs located within detention facilities in northeast Syria but has yet to repatriate any. A National Action Plan for 2021-24, was developed with support from the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) and UNOCT, to prevent violent extremism and counter terrorism.

International and Regional Cooperation: Turkmenistan cooperates with international and regional organizations, including the UN Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force, UNRCCA, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNOCT, UNDP, the EU, and the OSCE. As a member of the C5+1, Turkmenistan also participates in the associated Security Working Group with the four other Central Asian countries and the United States.

The GoTM sent delegations or attended the following events in 2023:

- In January a joint briefing organized by the UNRCCA, UNOCT, UNODC, UNDP, the OSCE, and the EU Delegation in Turkmenistan focused on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism initiatives in Turkmenistan. In addition, UNDP and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection held a workshop in Ashgabat on Prevention of Violent Extremism for Advisory Groups for representatives of Turkmenistan's law enforcement agencies.
- In March a UNDP event was held to share experiences and summarize the results of the Turkmenistan country component of the global project Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism in Asia (or STRIVE Asia).
- In June a joint OSCE and UNOCT regional workshop took place in Turkmenistan on prevention of bioterrorism attacks. A UNODC-organized workshop happened in Ashgabat on the tools available to collect and analyze travel information to strengthen counterterrorism border management capacities. Lastly, former-Deputy Foreign Minister Vepa Hajiyeu participated in a meeting of the heads of CT agencies of UN member states during the High-Level Week on Combating Terrorism in New York.
- The presidents of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated in a summit in Ashgabat and signed a joint statement on strengthening cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
- In September a joint UNODC, UNOCT, UNRCCA, and Financial Monitoring Service of the Ministry of Finance and Economy organized a three-day course on investigations of terrorism financing in Ashgabat for GoTM representatives of legal, financial, law enforcement, and judicial authorities.
- The U.S. Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program organized a training program in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, with participation from Turkmen officials from the Ministries of Interior, Security and State Border, Customs, and Migration Services.