



**Oral Statement
Adoption of the UPR report of Turkmenistan
20 September 2018
Delivered by ...**

Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, CIVICUS welcomes the government of Turkmenistan's engagement with the UPR process. We welcome the release of journalist Saparmamed Nepeskuliev but note with concern that his health deteriorated while serving a three-year prison term on spurious drug-charges that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found to be arbitrary.

In our UPR Submission, we documented that since its last review, Turkmenistan has not implemented any of the 27 recommendations made relating to civic space, including the 24 recommendations that were accepted.

Furthermore, there are 112 individuals forcibly disappeared, who have been targeted for political opposition or their work in civil society. We echo the recommendation made in the 3rd Cycle Review that Turkmenistan welcome a visit by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances.

We are further concerned by state interference in the media. In April 2018, the President dismissed Kaybov Myratdurdy, the editor of *Edebiyat we Sungat* newspaper and replaced him with his own candidate. The state has also forcibly dismantled private satellite dishes which allow citizens to access foreign TV and radio stations.

Mr. President, we are deeply concerned by ongoing violations of freedom of assembly. The government of Turkmenistan regularly and coercively mobilises residents for public events and frequently-regularly implements *subbotnik* (or forced labour) days. Mr. President, this practice runs contrary to the right to freedom of assembly, a basic element of which is voluntary participation in assemblies.

Due to numerous obstacles in the 2014 Law on Public Associations, no independent human rights organisations exist in Turkmenistan. We urge the government to implement the recommendations made during the 3rd Cycle Review to simplify the legal and procedural requirements for the registration of civil society.

Mr. President, CIVICUS calls on the Government of Turkmenistan to take proactive measures to address these concerns and implement recommendations to create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society.

We thank you.