
Turkmenistan

**Total area:**

491,210 km²

Population:

5,171,943 (2014)

Literacy:

98%

Official languages:

Turkmen

GDP (PPP) per capita:

\$18,771 (2017 est.)

Life expectancy:

65 years

Religions:

89% Muslim, 9% Russian Orthodox, 2% other religions

Prayer points

Closely watched

Turkmenistan's regime seems to do whatever it deems necessary to stay in power, suppressing all groups it perceives as dangerous. Every meeting for religious reasons is met with suspicion and all Christian assemblies need to register. All unregistered religious activity is strictly illegal and the government uses the 'Council on Religious Affairs' to monitor and pressure churches. There are informers in the churches, so Christians always have to be careful about what they say and how they say it, whether registered or not. Please pray for these oppressed believers who have hardly any freedom to practise their faith. Pray too for the translation and distribution of God's Word in local languages. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - March 2014)

Watching TV

Disabled people in Turkmenistan have few opportunities for jobs or education. So, Mekan (21) spent most of his time at home watching satellite TV. One day, he found a show which attracted him as it was not government propadanda - it was about God. The programme Mekan found - connecting Old Testament stories to the good news of Jesus - was broadcast on *Kanal Hayat*, a 24/7 channel pioneered by Eurasian Christian Television in partnership with WorldShare. Mekan started watching regularly - and God worked in his heart. He made contact with *Kanal Hayat* by internet and, after talking with a team member, accepted Jesus. Contact continued as Mekan was prayed for and encouraged in his new faith. There are no open church meetings in Turkmenistan because of persecution. Yet praise God that today's technology enables organisations like *Kanal Hayat* to help new believers like Mekan. (WorldShare - July 2012)

Christians under pressure

The Turkmen Government retains strict control over its people. The constitution provides for freedom of religion, but all religious groups must register and all unregistered religious activity is banned. Private homes and unregistered places of worship are often raided by police, Christians arrested and fined and imported religious literature is censored. Believers from a Muslim background are pressured by their community to return to Islam. Nevertheless, the Church is growing. In one town 17 new believers were baptised. Pray for protection and progress for those translating the Old Testament into the Turkmen language, for more opportunities for Christians in the country to meet together for worship, and for courage for believers being harassed by the authorities. (Open Doors UK and Ireland - July 2010)

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