

## **Tajikistan: Mystery of Missing Turkmen Students**

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A month after the start of the academic year, universities and colleges in Tajikistan are still missing one body of foreign students. The authorities in Turkmenistan seem to be preventing students from leaving the country to return to their courses in Tajikistan.

Only a handful of the anticipated 1,600 students have turned up to class, either because they stayed in Tajikistan over the summer or because they made the journey via circuitous routes through other countries.

“We don’t know the reason – they won’t say,” one the few Turkmen students who did not go home for the summer said. “If we get through to them on the phone they just say, “we aren’t being allowed out”.”

Turkmenistan is a notoriously closed state, but there is no obvious reason why officials would suddenly take against Tajikistan, with which relations are cordial. Tajik education officials have tried in vain to get an answer. The Turkmen embassy in Dushanbe has nothing to say on the matter.

*The audio programme, in Russian and Tajik, went out on national radio stations in Tajikistan, as part of IWPR project work funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

**Location:** [Turkmenistan](#)  
[Tajikistan](#)

**Focus:** [Central Asia Radio](#)

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