

Turkmenistan: New Chief for State's Human Rights Body

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On February 8, Turkmen president Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov appointed Yazdursun Gurbannazarova as director of the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights.

Kurbannazarova, 42, a lawyer and former member of parliament, succeeds Shirin Ahmedova, who headed the state human rights agency for more than three years.

Two weeks earlier, Ahmedova, a former governor of the Mary region and long-serving justice ministry official, was elected to the Turkmen parliament. This is being seen as a promotion, as she is regarded as an experienced and trusted official.

“When Shirin Ahmedova started working as director of the National Institute for Democracy, there were only positive references about her”, says an NBCentral Asia observer in Ashgabat. “Many people are wondering why Yazdursun Gurbannazarova was appointed to this position”.

The National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights operates under the president’s office, and was established in 1996 “to strengthen democratic institutions in the state and society, ensure respect for constitutional human rights, individual liberties, and the fulfilment of Turkmenistan’s international commitments”.

Location: [Turkmenistan](#)

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