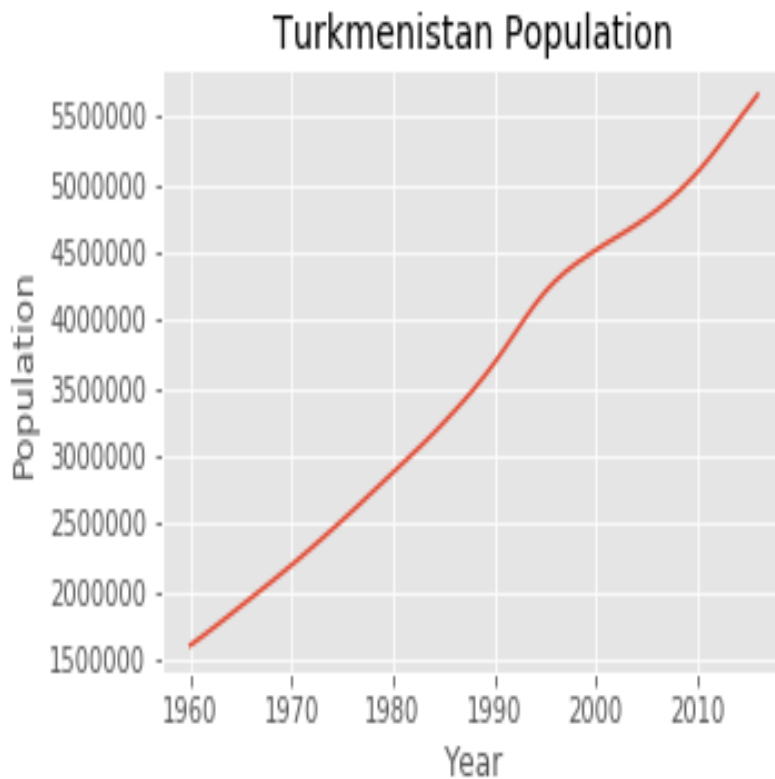


# Turkmenistan



Coordinates: 40°N 60°E﻿ / ﻿40°N 60°E﻿ / 40; 60Turkmenistan (/tʊrkˈmɛnɪˈstæn/ (listen) or /tʊrkmˈnɪˈstæn/ (listen); Turkmen: Türkmenistan, pronounced [tyɾkmeniˈθtɛn]), (formerly known as Turkmenia) is a sovereign state in Central Asia, bordered by Kazakhstan to the northwest, Uzbekistan to the north and east, Afghanistan to the southeast, Iran to the south and southwest, and the Caspian Sea to the west. Ashgabat is the capital and largest city. The population of the country is 5.6 million, the lowest of the Central Asian republics. Turkmenistan has been at the crossroads of civilizations for centuries. In medieval times, Merv was one of the great cities of the Islamic world and an important stop on the Silk Road, a caravan route used for trade with China until the mid-15th century. Annexed by the Russian Empire in 1881, Turkmenistan later figured prominently in the anti-Bolshevik movement in Central Asia. In 1925, Turkmenistan became a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (Turkmen SSR); it became independent upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.