



Turkmenistan



Background Present-day Turkmenistan has been at the crossroads of civilizations for centuries. Various Persian empires ruled the area in antiquity, and Alexander the Great, Muslim armies, the Mongols, Turkic warriors, and eventually the Russians conquered it. In medieval times, Merv (located in present-day Mary province) was one of the great cities of the Islamic world and an important stop on the Silk Road. Annexed by Russia in the late 1800s, Turkmen territories later figured prominently in the anti-Bolshevik resistance in Central Asia. In 1924, Turkmenistan became a Soviet republic; it achieved independence when the USSR dissolved in 1991.

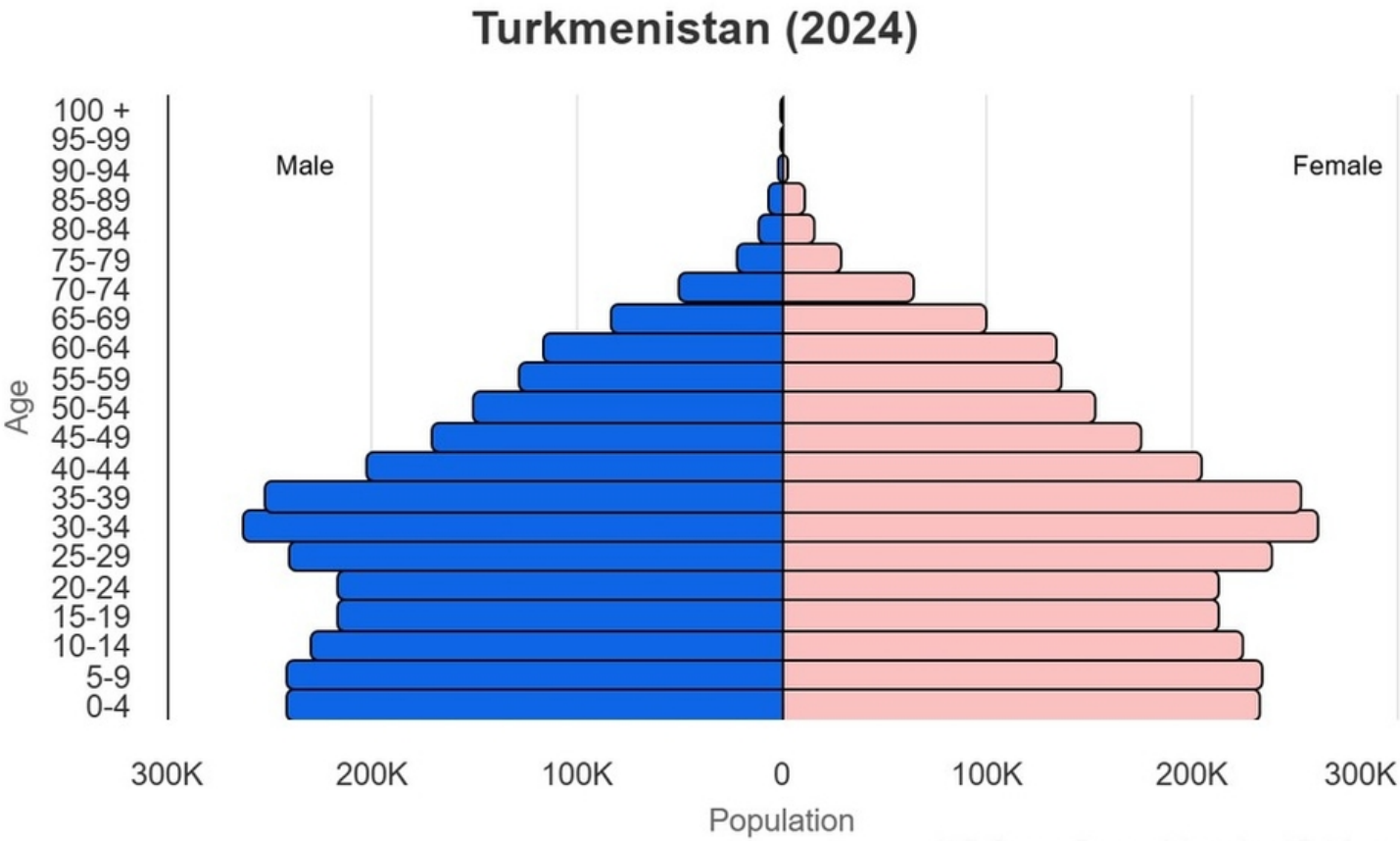
President for Life Saparmurat NIYAZOV died in 2006, and Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOV, a deputy chairman under NIYAZOV, emerged as the country's new president. BERDIMUHAMEDOV won Turkmenistan's first multi-candidate presidential election in 2007, and again in 2012 and 2017 with over 97% of the vote in elections widely regarded as undemocratic. In 2022, BERDIMUHAMEDOV announced that he would step down from the presidency and called for an election to replace him. His son, Serdar BERDIMUHAMEDOV, won the ensuing election with 73% of the vote. Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOV, although no longer head of state, maintains an influential political position as head of the Halk Maslahaty (People's Council) and as National Leader of the Turkmen People, a title that provides additional privileges and immunity for him and his family. Since Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOV stepped down from the presidency, state-controlled media upgraded his honorific from Arkadag (protector) to Hero-Arkadag, and began referring to Serdar BERDIMUHAMEDOV as Arkadagly Serdar, which can be translated as "Serdar who has a protector to support him."

Turkmenistan has sought new export markets for its extensive hydrocarbon/natural gas reserves, which have yet to be fully exploited. Turkmenistan's reliance on gas exports has made the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in the global energy market, and economic hardships since the drop in energy prices in 2014 have led many citizens of Turkmenistan to emigrate, mostly to Turkey.

Capital	name: Ashgabat (Ashkhabad)
Government type	presidential republic; authoritarian
Area	total : 488,100 sq km land: 469,930 sq km water: 18,170 sq km
Climate	subtropical desert
Natural resources	petroleum, natural gas, sulfur, salt
Population	total: 5,744,151 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	0.92% (2024 est.)

Ethnic groups	Turkmen 85%, Uzbek 5%, Russian 4%, other 6% (2003 est.)
Religions	Muslim 93%, Christian 6.4%, Buddhist <1%, folk religion <1%, Jewish <1%, other <1%, unspecified <1% (2020 est.)
Languages	Turkmen (official) 72%, Russian 12%, Uzbek 9%, other 7%
Executive branch	chief of state: President Serdar BERDIMUHAMEDOV (since 19 March 2022) head of government: President Serdar BERDIMUHAMEDOV (since 19 March 2022)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Assembly (Mejlis)
Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Meret ORAZOV (since 14 February 2001)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Elizabeth ROOD (since 31 July 2024)
Economic overview	upper middle-income Central Asian economy; has 10% of global natural gas reserves, exporting to Russia and China; natural resource rich; authoritarian and dominated by state-owned enterprises; major central-south Asian pipeline development
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$134.555 billion (2024 est.) \$131.576 billion (2023 est.) \$123.778 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$18,000 (2024 est.) \$17,900 (2023 est.) \$17,100 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$13.111 billion (2023 est.) \$14.67 billion (2022 est.) \$10.282 billion (2021 est.)
Exports - partners	China 63%, Turkey 11%, Greece 7%, Uzbekistan 6%, Azerbaijan 4% (2023)
Exports - commodities	natural gas, refined petroleum, fertilizers, crude petroleum, electricity (2023)
Imports	\$7.563 billion (2023 est.) \$7.362 billion (2022 est.) \$6.25 billion (2021 est.)
Imports - partners	Turkey 21%, UAE 21%, China 20%, Kazakhstan 8%, Germany 5% (2023)
Imports - commodities	broadcasting equipment, cars, wheat, computers, iron pipes (2023)

Population Pyramid



U.S. Census Bureau, International Database