



RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION HONORING THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY'S TURKMEN SERVICE

March 14, 2018

WHEREAS, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's (RFE/RL) Turkmen Service broadcast its first daily program on March 2, 1953 with the commitment to provide professional, uncensored news to the people of Turkmenistan;

WHEREAS, with its reporting the Turkmen Service has for 65 years promoted a message of freedom, democracy, human rights, and respect for the rule of law within a country where authoritarianism reigns and the domestic media is entirely state-controlled;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service is the only international and independent media outlet reporting on Turkmenistan in the Turkmen language, and its broadcasting is the main source of independent and reliable information about what happens in the country for audiences both inside Turkmenistan and abroad;

WHEREAS, the brave RFE/RL correspondents who work within the country are regularly questioned, detained, and otherwise harassed, including contributor Saparmamed Nepeskuliev, who disappeared in the city of Avaza in July 2015, and has been held virtually incommunicado since his disappearance;

WHEREAS, the Turkmen government has permanently blocked access to RFE/RL Turkmen Service's websites and other digital platforms inside the country, yet the Service has successfully attracted audiences via proxy servers and innovation with new media tools;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service provides comprehensive coverage of Turkmenistan's political situation, and encourages public discourse and accountability by authorities via covering events and issues most relevant to ordinary Turkmens, including local development issues, power shortages, and natural disasters; and

WHEREAS, the Turkmen government has been spurred to action as a result of the Service's reporting, including in August 2017 when the Turkmen Service was the only media to report on a landslide and water surge that swept through a village in Baharden district of Akhal province, killing some 30 people – and two weeks later Turkmenistan's President Berdimuhamedow, during a cabinet meeting, approved measures to tackle natural disasters in order to prevent damages and casualties during future torrents and flooding.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Broadcasting Board of Governors and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) that we celebrate and commemorate the 65th anniversary of RFE/RL's Turkmen Service, as it plays an essential role not only with reporting in the country but also in providing the world a window into this long-closed society.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board and CEO applaud and thank current and former members of RFE/RL's Turkmen Service for their bravery in reporting the news despite extreme obstacles, and their commitment to the mission of providing free news and information to Turkmen audiences.