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Introduction

In the past year that had a motto “Turkmenistan is the Motherland of Prosperity”, the country continued to successfully implement the tasks to create all the necessary conditions for a peaceful and prosperous life of the people identified in policies and national programmes. Milestones achieved because of the fundamental transformations carried out in the country, increased its economic power and authority in the world. The reforms implemented over the past year were aimed at all areas, ensured a progressive increase in the level of protection of rights of man and citizen and the standard of living of the population.

In the reporting year, Turkmenistan was in the centre of attention of the world community, with its creative, humanitarian initiatives, and as a state, that promotes the development of international relations in this area. Based on the “open door” policy, the country has remained the country of conferences, fora and other events dedicated to various issues of global and regional importance, including issues of the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

In the past year of 2019, Turkmenistan carried out an exemplary work in terms of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, at the high-level Political Forum at the UN headquarters, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Turkmenistan was presented. It highlighted the main directions of Turkmenistan’s development and the successes achieved by the country on the SDGs, the progressive targets of 2019 were presented.

The comprehensive implementation of the digital system in the economy was identified last year as one of the important vectors of state policy. Thus, in the framework of the implementation of the Concept for the Development of the digital economy for 2019-2025, the technological transformation of all sectors and the public administration system for them was launched.

One of the important events of the year was the start of constitutional reform aimed at developing democracy in society, ensuring and protecting human rights and freedoms, strengthening the foundations of state regulation, which provides for the transition of the country's legislative body to a bicameral system.

The above-mentioned and other important events that took place in the country show that ensuring the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of man and citizen has become the key objective of the state.

The annual report of the Authorized Representative on Human rights in Turkmenistan (hereinafter referred to as the Ombudsperson) highlighting the human rights situation in the country and the work carried out by the Ombudsperson in 2019, is dedicated to the analysis of the practical implementation of these tasks.

The report comprises nine chapters. Its content includes the analysis of the real situation in the field of human rights and freedoms in the country, the positive successes achieved in observing human rights and the issues that have taken place in this regard.

In order to further improve the situation of human rights in the country, in the final chapter of the report, based on the situation in the field of human rights in the country, the work carried out in this area, including the results of work done with citizens' appeals and information received from relevant state authorities, the adequate proposals for developing mechanisms to eliminate gaps and address the relevant issues are presented.

In accordance with Article 20 of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, this report shall be submitted for consideration to the esteemed President of Turkmenistan and the Ombudsperson shall deliver this report to the Mejlis of Turkmenistan. The report shall be promulgated in the media of Turkmenistan.

We express our confidence that the government authorities, local self-governments, international organizations, civil society and the public, having read the report of the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan on the results of 2019, will draw conclusions about the work carried out in the field of protecting and promoting the rights and freedoms of man and citizen, and they will provide assistance within their competence in further strengthening the implementation of human rights.

Chapter The situation of ensuring and observing the rights and I. freedoms of man and citizen in Turkmenistan

In the modern age, independent, neutral Turkmenistan is developing in a stable and progressive way. Large-scale transformations are being carried out in the politics, economy, social sphere and culture. Tasks associated with the fundamental reform of our independent motherland rapidly developing at the current era of prosperity include mainly its transformation into the powerful, self-sufficient state, based on the progress made within the historically short term.

The reporting period has become the result of significant human rights developments due to the positive domestic and foreign policies implemented by the country. Political, economic, social, legal transformations, including the transition to private ownership, the development of civil society facilitated enabling conditions for the full implementation of human rights in our country.

As we know, these transformations are the result of ongoing comprehensive work based on long-term programmes and plans implemented throughout the country.

In particular, while the successful implementation of such socio-economic programmes as the “Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the socio-economic development of the country for 2019-2025”, “The National Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the transformation of the social and living conditions of the population of villages, etrap towns, and etrap centres until 2020, new version”, “National Programme of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030”, “The Concept for the development of the digital economy in Turkmenistan for 2019-2025”, “The Programme for improving the sphere of employment and creating new jobs in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020”, “The State Programme for the support of small and medium enterprises in Turkmenistan for 2018-2024” play an important role in strengthening the economic power of the country, as well as in improving the social and living standards of people, the adopted and implemented plans directly aimed at strict observance of human rights, demonstrate the commitment of Turkmenistan to the international obligations in the field of human rights.

Thus, during the reporting period, significant work was carried out to fulfill international obligations in the field of human rights, to ensure and protect human rights and freedoms within the framework of the activities outlined in the “National Action Plan for the promotion of gender equality in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020”, “The National Human Rights Action Plan of Turkmenistan for 2016-2020”, “The National Action Plan for the implementation of the rights of children in Turkmenistan for 2018-2022”, “The Plan of Activities to ensure the full implementation of rights in the field of labour and employment of persons with disabilities in Turkmenistan for 2017-2020 years.”

In addition, during 2019, important human rights plans were approved by resolutions of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan. This included the “National Action Plan to eliminate statelessness in Turkmenistan for 2019–2024,” approved within the framework of the Global Action Plan to end statelessness for 2014–2024 announced by UNHCR and aimed to end statelessness in the country. Moreover, on 6 December 2019, the relevant resolutions of the President of Turkmenistan concurrently approved three plans aimed at ensuring human rights. In particular, the following plans were approved and began to be implemented:

“The National Action Plan of Turkmenistan to combat trafficking in human beings for 2020-2022” with the aim of developing co-operation between government authorities, public associations and international organizations in the fight against human trafficking related to international humanitarian law aimed at ensuring sustainable development in Turkmenistan, human rights and freedoms, strengthening social and legal protection of the population;

“The National Strategy of Turkmenistan to prevent violent extremism and to counter terrorism for 2020-2024” with the aim of ensuring a prosperous life for the people, peace, security, as well the implementation of a systematic government policy on combating terrorism, which is an urgent issue on the international agenda, development of co-operation of state institutions, public associations with international organizations in this field;

“The National Strategy of Turkmenistan on the early child development for 2020-2025” with the aim of protecting the health of mothers and children, which is a priority of the state policy of the country, and developing co-operation with international organizations in this field.

It is worth noting that during the period under review, significant work was carried out within the framework of these programmes in order to ensure and protect civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of citizens. The state fully funds and carries out wide-scale activities to implement measures related to improving the living standards of the population, creating enabling conditions for the development of human potential. Despite the provision in the country of legal safeguards of the inalienable rights and freedoms of man and citizen and the practical implementation of these rights and freedoms, there are situations that require further actions in this area. This is described in detail in the relevant chapters of this report.

Transformations to ensure the well-being of the people, carried out in the context of Turkmenistan's domestic and foreign policies, are implemented with the support and participation of the people. The large-scale activity, implemented under the leadership of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, aimed at achieving certain goals, is a key factor in social development, political, economic and cultural transformations in the country, and, at the same time, the result of the creative potential of the people.

Thus, a clearly adjusted political course implemented by the country creates opportunities for people to be active participants in the country's process of progressive development. This is a clear confirmation of the harmonious political development of the country along with social development.

It should also be noted that all the country's national transformational strategies are aimed at achieving the SDGs and the tasks included in the Global Agenda until 2030.

In particular, after adopting the SDGs by the UN member countries, Turkmenistan began to adapt the SDGs at the national level. In order to implement the SDGs in the country, an Interagency working group was established, which included representatives of state institutions, academia, business circles, public organizations. The Interagency working group with participation of UN agencies held consultations on each of the 17 goals, made an analysis of aligning of SDGs' targets and areas with national goals. The assessment was made as to what extent the SDGs were incorporated in the national programmes, policies and plans. This work has clearly confirmed that more than 80% of SDGs' targets were already highlighted in the national and sectoral programmes of the country.

2019 was also the year of significant work carried out in the context of implementation of the SDGs. In particular, on 18 July 2019, a Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Turkmenistan was presented at the high-level Political Forum at the UN headquarters on the "Empowering people and ensuring universal coverage and equality". It outlined key aspects of Turkmenistan's development and the main successes achieved by the country in the area of the SDGs implementation. More specifically, the 2019 VNR has shown the step-by-step goals for 2019. These included a quality education (4th goal), decent work and economic growth (8th goal), reducing inequality (10th goal), combating climate change (13th goal), peace, justice and effective institutions (16th goal), partnership for sustainable development (17th goal). The review was complemented by a 3rd goal, which includes health and well-being.

Thus, consistent measures aimed at achieving the SDGs play an important role in the country's politics. This politics, based on the huge economic potential of the state, incorporated numerous aspects united by one goal and were focused on specific vectors. This is ensuring a happy life for the people and each citizen. In addition, the activities carried out in this direction served as a good example of our country's commitment to the practical implementation of the goals and objectives included in the Global Agenda until 2030.

The Halk Maslahaty (*People's Council*) of Turkmenistan is the highest representative body acting in accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan and representing the interests of the people of Turkmenistan. This representative authority of the people acts on the basis of the Constitutional Law of Turkmenistan "On the Halk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan" and at the legislative level provides for the participation of representatives of all segments of the population in its activities.

One of the socio-political events of the year for the reporting period was also the constitutional transformation and the transition to a bicameral system of the legislative body with the aim of broadly ensuring the realization of the rights of the people, raising the status of the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan. Constitutional

transformations are aimed at developing democracy in our society, ensuring and protecting human rights and freedoms, and strengthening the foundations of public administration.

After our country reached to a new stage of development, new demands were being put forward before society and the state, and new social relations were being formed. As already noted, in the reporting year, constitutional reform was launched to formalize a new stage of the ongoing profound changes in all spheres of society and the state. In particular, the esteemed President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at the meeting of the Halk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan on 25 September 2019, focused on the importance of this significant issue for the life of the state and society. Given the transformations taking place in the world and the experience gained in many countries, the head of state put forward a proposal on the expediency of switching to a bicameral system and uniting the Halk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan and the Mejlis of Turkmenistan with a system of bodies that implement the tasks of the representative legislative branch. The proposals of the esteemed President were unanimously supported and new reforms in the country were launched. In order to successfully address the issues in this area, large-scale work has begun. The Constitutional Commission was established by Decree of the President of Turkmenistan on changes and amendments in the Constitution of Turkmenistan and its composition was approved in order to prepare evidence-based proposals for amending and supplementing the Constitution of Turkmenistan. In this regard, the relevant working group was established under the Mejlis of Turkmenistan. During the reporting year, effective work was carried out, within the framework of which two meetings of the Constitutional Commission were held along with regular meetings of the working group.

It cannot be denied that the transition of the national legislative body to a bicameral system will create a reliable legal basis for addressing the main task of state authorities in further strict observance of constitutional norms on the protection, support and service to people, expressed in the humane principle of our country's motto "The State is for man!", as well as to achieve the constitutional reform goals carried out in the new historical era of our democratic, legal and secular state.

According to the results of the review of the situation on ensuring human rights in Turkmenistan, it should be noted that a considerable amount of work is underway to strengthen the legal framework of the multifaceted transformations launched in the country.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize that in 2019, the Mejlis passed 65 laws; a significant part of them was aimed at further improving the legislative framework for ensuring enabling social and living conditions for the people, strict observance of human rights and freedoms.

Chapter II. Civil and political rights

It should be specially noted that important steps have been taken in the country in the field of protecting civil and political human rights and freedoms. Work in this direction currently is carried out consistently. In particular, reports from previous years stated that Turkmenistan on 20 December 1996 ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and its Optional Protocol, even more so, civil and political rights and freedoms are a prerequisite for the realization of all other rights. In this context, Turkmenistan, as a state party to these international documents from the moment of accession to them, has demonstrated legal and political commitment to improve national human rights legislation and bring it in line with generally accepted international standards. This way, the basic provisions of the Covenant have been implemented in the relevant legislative acts, starting with the Constitution of Turkmenistan, and this work is being consistently continued in the country. This is confirmed by the activities of the deputies of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan of the 6th convocation for the last 2019 year, in particular, their improvement of laws that encompass human rights standards, as well as civil and political rights. More precisely, the improvement of the Criminal Procedure Code of Turkmenistan, the Correctional Code of Turkmenistan, the Laws of Turkmenistan “On Countering Terrorism”, “On the State Border of Turkmenistan”, “On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations” should be mentioned.

Speaking about the implementation of civil and political rights, the fulfillment of the international obligations undertaken by our country and co-operation with international organizations should be noted. As it is known, comprehensive work is underway to submit to the relevant UN committees national reports on the implementation of the country's international obligations in the field of civil and political rights, as well as to study the recommendations made by committee members and work on them. In addition, in order to ensure civil and political rights of the people, national plans are developed in certain areas together with international organizations. In particular, the international community provides great support to the active development of humanitarian co-operation, which is the basic issue and the main condition for sustainable development and which is an important aspect of the country's foreign policy, as well as to the active participation in addressing issues related to refugees, stateless persons and migrants. It should be highlighted that during 2019, significant work was carried out in this direction. Thus, in January 2019, by the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan, the National Action Plan to end statelessness in Turkmenistan for 2019-2024” was approved and began to effectively come to fruition. Guided by the principles of humanism and virtue of our ancestors, in accordance with the decrees of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, currently about 23 thousand (22.930) stateless persons permanently residing in our country, have been naturalized and

received citizenship of Turkmenistan. In the past reporting year, these humane works were continued and, by Presidential Decree, 863 people received citizenship of Turkmenistan. The ongoing consecutive work in this area confirms our country's commitment to international human rights obligations.

Monitoring the implementation of civil and political human rights, along with other activities envisaged by the Ombudsperson's annual work plan, some work has been done in this direction. The Constitution of Turkmenistan guarantees the right of citizens to elect and be elected to state authorities and local self-governments. State authorities and local self-governments organize and hold free democratic elections, ensure the implementation of this constitutional right of our citizens.

As it is known, on 31 March 2019, elections were held in the country for the positions of deputies of the Mejlis, members of the welayat, etrap, city Halk Maslahaty and Gengeshis who early discontinued their authority.

During the preparation period and on Election Day, in order to monitor the creation of conditions for the exercise of citizens' rights to elect and be elected, the Ombudsperson and staff members visited a number of polling stations.

Namely, on 30 March 2019 they visited the 54th polling station, organized in the secondary school No. 143 in the Gurtly residential settlement of the Buzmeyin etrap of Ashgabat, the 53rd polling station in the first block of the secondary school No. 100 in the Yalkym residential settlement of the same etrap, 55th polling station - in the second block of the same school. They were familiarized with ensuring the rights of candidates and voters, the compliance of the electoral process with the requirements of relevant legislation.

On Election Day 31 March, polling stations in the Bagtyyarlyk district of Ashgabat, in particular the 85th and 86th polling stations, organized in secondary school No. 131 of the city, were visited to observe the election. On the same day, the 81st polling station located at the Turkmen State Special Art School at the State Academy of Arts of Turkmenistan was also visited.

When visiting polling stations, the main attention was paid to conditions created at polling stations to freely exercise their electoral rights by voters, to their names in the voter lists, opportunities to make decisions after having fully familiarized themselves with candidates' CVs, and to conditions for participating in the preliminary voting of voters who would not be able to stay at the place of residence on election day, and voters who were not able to independently arrive at the election site, as well as the presence or absence of complaints on violation of the right to elect or be elected, the compliance of the work of election commissions with the requirements of the law.

As a result, during the preparation and conduct of the elections, serious shortcomings in compliance with the requirements of the legislation were not revealed in general. Oral comments were made in connection with some inaccuracies in the documents, inconsistencies with the Guidelines for precinct election commissions, and shortcomings were corrected on the ground.

357 national observers monitored the election process. For the current elections, as well as for the previous ones, CCTVs were installed at 21 polling stations of the city of Ashgabat and welayats for the first time through which live and continuous broadcasting of the electoral process was carried out online on the website of the Central Election Commission.

According to the Central Commission for Elections and Referenda of Turkmenistan (CEC) at the time of the close of polling stations, in particular by 19:00, 91.12 percent of voters participated in the elections of deputies of the Mejlis, and the members of Ashgabat city Halk maslakhaty - 90.86 percent, members of etraps, towns halk maslahaty - 90.71 percent and members of Gengeshis - 90.9 percent.

During the past 2019, the Office of the Ombudsperson received no complaints from citizens about violation of the electoral right, including during the election period.

One of the areas of the Ombudsperson's activity in the field of protection of civil and political rights is monitoring the observance of the rights of convicts and persons held in correctional and rehabilitation institutions.

Thus, the Ombudsperson, in accordance with Article 21 of the Correctional Code of Turkmenistan and Article 18 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson" has the authority to freely and without prior notice visit correctional and other specialized institutions, places of pretrial detention facilities, prison facilities and conduct the organization audit in them either independently or jointly with other competent state bodies, officials, civil servants.

In order to fulfill the official powers prescribed by law, the Ombudsperson visited a number of such institutions during 2019, where she verified compliance with the rights of persons held in these places and implementation of the requirements of the Correctional Code of Turkmenistan.

Thus, the Ombudsperson, during the visit of the institution MR-E/16 of the Police Department of Ahal welayat, carried out inspection, basically, of full compliance with sanitary standards in the places of residence of convicts, the available opportunities for protecting their health, nutrition, cultural activities, sports,

working conditions, holding short and long meetings with close relatives. During the inspection period, a maximum security institution held 1.190 convicts.

First, she acquainted with the created opportunities for protecting health. In the medical service department of the institution, conditions have been created for prisoners to receive inpatient treatment with a unit for 21 beds, as well as for medical examination and outpatient treatment.

Their transfer with security guards to medical diagnostic centres located outside the institution shall be arranged as necessary. 6 relevant units of the medical service provide medical services to convicts, in particular 4 doctors with higher education, 2 staff with secondary specialized education. When checking drug supplies at the medical department and at the drug store of the institution, no expired drugs were found. Information about the convicts, the diagnosis of their diseases, were drawn up in the appropriate manner. 22 convicted persons with disabilities with various diseases were under special observation.

In addition, the institution created an opportunity for familiarization of convicts with books of Turkmen and foreign writers and poets, newspapers and magazines. Library supplied with 206 copies of books of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, 253 copies of economic and political books and 612 copies of fiction books. According to the current subscription for books, it was clear that dozens of convicts used the library services every day.

There was also an opportunity for them to use a store of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan. During the inspection, there were no expired food products there.

As noted above, at the time of the inspection there were 1.190 convicts in the institution and a certain part of them, in accordance with the requirements of the Correctional Code of Turkmenistan, exercised their right to work. The audit found that 202 convicts were provided with jobs. 76 of them worked in a brick-chalk workshop; 16 - in the workshop for the manufacture of iron and aluminum windows and doors; 10 - in a woodworking workshop; 74 - in the sewing workshop; 9 - in the workshop for the manufacture of saddles and 17 people in the general service.

As can be seen, the majority of convicts worked in production facilities, and wages were paid to them according to the volume of production. The remaining 17 convicts working in the general service were paid wages established by the state budget. Salaries were transferred in non-cash form to the current account of each convict, and the opportunity has been created for transferring money from their current account to relatives or for non-cash payment for a purchase in a store located on the premises of the institution.

It should be noted that in order to ensure the right of convicts to freedom of religion as stipulated by law, a mosque with 600 seats with all the amenities was built and commissioned that convicts freely use.

Verification and compliance with the law when considering appeals received from both the convicts themselves and their relatives, was carried out in the institution. The audit found that for 11 months of the reporting period, a total 171 applications were received from relatives and convicts, which were registered and considered in the manner prescribed by law. A significant part of the appeals concerned questions of pardon, parole, and social issues such as obtaining powers of attorney, divorce, and land issues, which were considered in the manner and terms established by law. In the same period, four applications were sent from the convicts themselves - on divorce and receipt of a power of attorney, which were also considered in the established manner.

In addition, the Ombudsperson visited the institution AH-E/1 of the Police Department of the Ahal welayat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where an inspection was carried out, basically, of full compliance with sanitary standards in the places of residence of the arrested, the conditions created for the protection of their health, nutrition, cultural and sports activities, working conditions, holding short and long meetings with close relatives. During the verification period, the institution contained 338 arrested persons, under investigation and convicted persons.

The medical department of this institution had created the opportunity to receive inpatient treatment with a 24 bed unit, as well as to undergo a medical examination and outpatient treatment. 8 relevant units of the medical service provided medical services to convicts, in particular 5 doctors with a higher education, 3 staff with secondary specialized education. When checking drugs supply at the medical department and at the drug store of the institution, no expired drugs were found. Information on the diagnosis of diseases of those arrested was drawn up in the prescribed manner.

Also, the institution created an opportunity for the detained to use library services. The library had books by Turkmen and foreign writers and poets, newspapers and magazines. In total, the library fund had 1.242 books, of which 329 were books written by the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, 913 books of fiction. The available number books in the Turkmen language was 790, in Russian - 423, in English – 66, which allowed the detained to read books not only in the Turkmen language, but also in frequently used foreign languages.

As noted, during the inspection period, the institution had 338 arrested, of whom 196 were convicted. Part of the convicts, namely 8 involved in the performance of

economic work. The staff of the department of economic services was 19 people, and the salary issued to them was established by the state budget. Their wages were transferred in non-cash form to the bank account of each convict. There were no violations of the labour rights of working convicts.

Also, an audit of compliance with the law was carried out when considering appeals received from prisoners and their relatives. During the audit, it was found that during the 11 months of the reporting period, a total of 57 applications were registered from the relatives of the convicts, and from the convicts themselves - 55. Basically, these were appeals on issues of obtaining powers of attorney. Appeals were considered in the manner and terms prescribed by law.

In order to check the conditions of the detainees in the institution and conduct an individual interview with them, the Ombudsperson visited separate cells. In particular, she met face to face with 20 women and 4 minors held there. During these meetings on complaints of disagreement with the conduct of investigative actions, the Ombudsperson clarified the norms of the current legislation.

Also, on the day of the inspection, the Ombudsperson inspected checkpoints and familiarized with the conditions created for meetings of the arrested with relatives; conversations were held with some relatives who had arrived for a meeting. No violations of the laws were identified here, however, the need was identified for improving the work of checkpoints and the Ombudsperson made relevant proposals in this regard.

During the past reporting year, the Ombudsperson, along with a visit to the institution for imprisoned persons and persons in custody, carried out an audit of the observance of the rights of persons in special rehabilitation institutions.

In particular, the special rehabilitation centre AH-M/4 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan was visited. Here an inspection was carried out of compliance with the Law of Turkmenistan “On measures related to the treatment of persons suffering from alcoholism, drug addiction or dependence on psychoactive substances”, the Regulation “On the procedure for the detention of people being treated in rehabilitation centres of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan”.

In this rehabilitation centre, compliance with sanitary standards in the places of residence of persons under treatment, the opportunities created in accordance with the requirements of the law to restore their health, nutrition, cultural, sports activities working conditions and meetings with close relatives were checked.

During the verification period, 1,216 people were treated at the rehabilitation institution, of which 304 people were provided with work in the production

facilities, in particular, in the sewing, brick workshops, in the workshops for the manufacture of iron, carpet, and reed products, 48 people were involved in general economic work with wages paid from the state budget.

In a separate building of a special rehabilitation centre repairs were carried out as part of the CADAP project of the European Union in 2012. This department had established special work with people who have three months left before the end of the treatment period. At the time of the inspection, there were 20 people being treated in this department.

At the time of the inspection, the staffing position of the centre was 219.5, of which 50 officers, 123 - privates and sergeants, 46.5 - civilian employees, 10 staffing units were vacant at that period. 26 staffing units belong to the medical service, directly involved in the rehabilitation of the health of persons in the treatment centre. Of these, 10 were doctors with higher education, 16 with secondary specialized education. There were no expired drugs in the hospital or pharmacy.

The centre had created an opportunity to use the services of the library by persons under treatment. The library fund consisted of 2.961 books, of which 203 were books written by the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, 2.758 copies of works of fiction. Books available in Turkmen language – 1.655, in Russian – 1.006, in English - 97 copies, which enabled to read books not only in Turkmen, but also in frequently used foreign languages.

During the 11 months of 2019, a total of 121 applications were received from relatives of persons under treatment. Of these, 35 - on the early release of persons under treatment; 86 - on social issues, such as, for example, obtaining a power of attorney. These applications were examined in accordance with the requirements of the law. During the inspection, the Ombudsperson held individual interviews with people under treatment, visited their rooms, the medical service department, and workshops. Clarifications on the provisions of the law were given on many issues. During the meetings, the Ombudsperson did not receive complaints from the persons under treatment for violations of their rights.

During the audit, despite the fact that, in general, the centre complied with the requirements of the law, the need for improving the opportunities for exercising the rights of people under treatment was identified, namely, in such areas as ensuring occupational safety, sports activities, and cultural leisure.

As inspections carried out in the special rehabilitation centre AH-M/4, AH-E/1 and MR-E/16 of the Police Department of Ahal welayat of the Ministry of Internal Affairs have shown, in general, that they [centres] comply with the requirements of the law, however some circumstances have been identified that require

improvement of activities and ensuring consistent monitoring. The Ombudsperson sent three recommendations on elimination of these circumstances to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan. They propose, mainly, based on labour legislation, to comply with labour and health safety rules, safety regulations and industrial sanitation standards, provide sports grounds with the necessary equipment to perform physical exercises, and equip special rooms for cultural leisure activities in order to realize the cultural rights of those held in institutions.

In order to eliminate the costs of additional time and the threat of transferring prohibited items, as well as improving control over parcels, small parcels sent by relatives, in accordance with the law, to persons held in these institutions, it was proposed to study the possibility of installing special scanning devices at checkpoints.

During the reporting period, the Office of the Ombudsperson received 62 written and 60 oral appeals related to civil and political rights, which were examined in accordance with the law, of which two written appeals were satisfied.

Chapter III. Economic, social and cultural rights

In 2019, which was held under the motto “Turkmenistan is the Motherland of Prosperity,” the country successfully implemented transformations aimed at ensuring the well-being of the people. That year was remembered as the year of successful implementation of the work launched previously and as the year when significant work was launched.

Among the main events of the year, should be noted the approval of the “Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the socio-economic development of the country for 2019-2025” and the “Programme for the development of foreign economic activity of Turkmenistan for 2020-2025”, as well as the beginning of the practical implementation of the Concept of transition to a digital economy for 2019-2025.

The adoption of these documents gave impetus to the next stage of transformational reforms, the main purpose of which is to strengthen the country's economic power and ensure the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. One of the main conditions for the successful implementation of these transformations is the existence of a perfect legal framework focused on the fulfillment of the tasks provided for in it.

In addition, the adoption of a number of new laws and the improvement of existing ones in order to comply with these requirements should be noted. In particular, during the reporting year, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan adopted the Laws of Turkmenistan “On Environmental Audit”, “On Rationalization Activity”, “On

Trademarks”, “On Appellations of origin of goods”, “On Psychological Services”, “On Civil Status Acts”. The laws of Turkmenistan “On the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan”, “On Licensing certain types of activities” were improved and adopted in a new version, dozens of existing laws were improved through the introduction of appropriate changes and additions. Regular improvement of laws in accordance with the requirements of the time and international standards serves as a solid guarantee of ensuring the economic, social and cultural rights of our citizens provided for by the Constitution of Turkmenistan, namely, labour, choice of profession, occupation and place of work at their discretion, receiving education, protection of health, housing, a favourable environment, recreation, participation in cultural life, social security.

At the same time, it should be noted that in order to ensure the indicated rights of citizens, in 2019, as well as annually, more than 70 percent of the expenses of the State budget were allocated to financing the social sphere. It is also important to mention a significant indicator - an increase of 10 percent last year, as in previous years, of wages, pensions, and state benefits of Turkmenistan citizens. Last year, the country's social strategy determined the maintenance of the level of employment among population as its integral part. As can be seen from official information, the creation of 11,000 jobs in 2019 confirms this.

Last year, special attention was paid to strengthening human resources in the context of consistent industrialization of the country, the transition to the digital economy and the formation of the information society, the development of a market economy and businesses. The following examples demonstrate this; in particular, if in 2018 the number of people registered in search of work in the country was 75.315, then in the reporting year, 68.988 people were employed.

It should be noted that “The Programme for improving the sphere of employment and creating new jobs in Turkmenistan for 2015–2020,” as well as “The Programme for improving the system of employing young specialists in Turkmenistan for 2018-2020” play an important role in achieving such indicators, which are currently being put into practice.

Turkmenistan, having acceded to the main conventions of the International Labour Organization, and being committed to the norms of these international documents, pursues a policy of creating equal favourable working conditions for all. This fully confirms the safeguarding by the Constitution of the right of everyone to work, the choice of profession, occupation and place of work at their discretion, healthy and safe working conditions, as well as the ban on forced labour and the worst forms of child labour. Here, it should be noted that in the reporting year, in order to improve labour relations in accordance with the international obligations of the country, carried out by socio-economic transformations, legislation was improved. Therefore, the relevant amendments and additions were made to the Labour Code of Turkmenistan and the Resolution of the Mejlis On joining the 144th Convention

of the International Labour Organization “On tripartite consultations to promote the application of international labour standards” was adopted.

As can be seen, in the reporting year, large-scale work was also carried out to realize the constitutional right of every citizen to work. Despite this, a certain part of the appeals received by the Office of the Ombudsperson is composed of appeals on labour issues. In the reporting year, in general, 39 written, 11.5% of the total number, 52 - oral, 13.2% of the total number of appeals were received on labour issues. A significant part of them is related to employment. Appeals were considered in the prescribed manner, consultations were given, of which four appeals were satisfied.

The country has created a full opportunity for the realization of the rights of citizens to science and education, to engage in science, to use the achievements of science, to receive education. These opportunities were created due to the work carried out to develop the motherland, increase its competitiveness in the global political, economic, and cultural space.

As a result of the great attention paid to the development of the scientific and educational sphere in the country, the material and technical base of scientific institutions and higher educational institutions is being strengthened, advanced information and communication technologies are being widely introduced, including access to world information achievements, to the Internet database and electronic libraries.

To create such opportunities, the unconditional support provided by the state for the development of science is increasing annually. Funding activity for advanced research, experimental and technological development is improving. The conditions were created for the implementation of scientific work, the expansion of the range of scientific research, the practical implementation of their results.

Successful implementation of transformations in the field of science requires legislative support, in accordance with the requirements of the era of advanced technologies and international standards. The country's scientific activity is regulated by such modern laws as “On Scientific organizations”, “On Scientific and Technological parks”, “On State Scientific and Technical policy”, and “On the Legal status of a scientific worker”. In order to further strengthen the material security of science, in the reporting year, the President of Turkmenistan signed the Decree “On Improving the efficiency of scientific research in Turkmenistan”, “On creating the Science Development Fund of the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan”, “On financial support for the development of the science system of Turkmenistan”. In order to provide broad state support for further strengthening the material and technical base of the Academy of Sciences and its subordinate institutions, research institutes, and training high-level scientists, a resolution was

adopted on the allocation of 35,000,000 (thirty five million) manats to the Academy of Sciences.

One of the important vectors of public policy is also to ensure accessibility and high-quality education at all stages.

With the introduction of world standards in the education system, the country is working in humanitarian sphere with missions of such UN agencies in Turkmenistan as the Children's Fund (UNICEF), Population Fund (UNFPA), Development Programme (UNDP), and UNESCO. A number of educational institutions of the country have established close contacts with dozens of educational institutions of foreign countries. The essential activation of international relations in this area is of great importance in improving the quality of education.

In the framework of multifaceted international co-operation and taking into account the expanding fruitful ties, the number of foreign languages studied by school students had been increased. Schools with in-depth study of English, French, German, Japanese and other languages worked successfully. Last year, a lot of work was done on educational and methodological support, including the publication of modern teaching aids. Work on the qualitative improvement of the educational system had brought important innovations to the school curriculum. Along with the main specialties, they included new specialties - the basics of the economy, the cultural heritage of Turkmenistan, world culture, modeling and graphics, information and communication and innovative technologies.

In the country, special attention was paid to the construction of buildings of higher and other educational institutions equipped with modern equipment. The opening of five secondary schools in the regions and a kindergarten in the capital was timed to coincide with the last school year. Large-scale work on the upbringing of a comprehensively developed, erudite young generation brings its positive results. This is confirmed by the annual increase in the number of winners of national and international subject Olympiads. In 2019, schoolchildren of the country at the international subject and project competitions won 142 medals, 37 - gold, 32 - silver and 73 - bronze. At international intellectual Olympiads, Turkmen students, in general, won 37 medals, including 9 - gold, 12 - silver and 16 bronze, and were awarded diplomas of various degrees.

The above successes were the result of the created opportunities in the scientific and educational sphere, ongoing transformative reforms of the system. All this testifies to guaranteeing the full realization of the rights of citizens of our country to engage in scientific discoveries, to use the achievements of science, to receive free secondary education, and to study at higher educational institutions. In the reporting year, it was envisaged to allocate 5,368,267.5 thousand manats from the

state budget for the development of education, of which 5,362,937.6 thousand manats, in particular, 99.9% were spent. This confirms that the country's education system was among the priority areas. During the past year, the Office of the Ombudsperson received one written and one verbal appeals on the education issues, which were examined in accordance with the requirements of the law.

Article 5 of the Basic Law stipulates that Turkmenistan is a state guaranteeing the social security of every person. The right of our citizens to social security is regulated by the Code of Turkmenistan on Social protection of the population and other regulatory legal acts that are based on the Constitution. Legislative acts in this area were regularly improved in accordance with international standards, relevant issues and the needs of the time. In addition, as it is widely known, in order to improve the social security of citizens and their social and living conditions, long-term programmes were being implemented. In the framework of these programmes, large-scale works were being carried out in order to increase social and living conditions and social security of the population. By the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan wages, pensions, state benefits, scholarships for students and students were increased by 10 percent in 2019, as in previous years.

In the reporting year, based on the Regulation approved by the Law of Turkmenistan on “The Establishment of the Ene mähri honorary title”, hundreds of mothers who gave birth and raised eight or more children were awarded the Ene mähri honorary title. Mothers with many children who have been awarded this honorary title also enjoyed the benefits provided for by the legislation of Turkmenistan. In our country, the goals of social welfare of citizens were addressed within the framework of the practical implementation of socio-economic programmes and plans, jointly prepared with the relevant UN agencies mentioned in the report.

Despite the full guarantee of citizens' rights to social security and the full implementation of these guarantees in practice, it should be noted that there were few related appeals to the Ombudsperson's Office. Thus, over the past year, the Ombudsperson's Office received complaints from citizens regarding social security issues: 2 - in writing and 1 - verbally. Appeals were considered in accordance with the requirements of the Law.

One of the necessary conditions in a person's life is the availability of housing with all amenities for life. The creation of this opportunity for our citizens is guaranteed in the Basic Law of the country, this norm is reflected in other legislative acts and is observed in practice. A number of successfully implemented socio-economic programmes, which were mentioned in the above chapters, as well as increasing socio-economic opportunities, speak in favour of this fact. It should be noted here that last year, 1.5 million square metres of housing were commissioned in the country, including residential buildings of superior comfort. As a result, thousands of families were provided with housing. As in previous years, in the country's

regions in the framework of the Programme for the socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for 2019-2025, the National Rural Programme was continued, construction was commissioned and new modern villages were laid. All this is an example of providing rural residents with modern residential buildings and the consistent improvement of other social conditions.

Also, as part of the creation of an opportunity for the realization of citizens' rights to housing in all regions of the country, a practice that might be rarely found globally continues, that is the issuance of funds with preferential interest rates by credit institutions for the construction of mortgage housing and for its acquisition. The above fact shows that in our country a huge amount of work was being done to improve the living conditions of citizens. However, most of the appeals received by the Office of the Ombudsperson related to housing issues. More precisely, over the past year, 89 complaints in writing or 26.3% and 128 orally or 32.4% were received regarding housing improvement and registration (*propiska*). Conclusions were drawn regarding appeals in accordance with the law, of which one appeal was satisfied. For detailed information on appeals of this type, see the relevant chapters.

Exemplary work is underway in the country to protect public health and prevent diseases by introducing among the public the principles of a healthy lifestyle. The legal basis of the ongoing work is being improved in accordance with the requirements of the time and international legal norms. In addition, in order to develop various areas of public health protection, the Saglyk (Health) State programme and long-term programmes are implemented. Thus, such programmes as the “National Programme for the protection of the mental health of the population in Turkmenistan for 2018-2022”, the “National Strategy for increasing the physical activity of the population in Turkmenistan for 2018-2025”, and the “National Programme for the prevention of harmful impacts of alcohol in Turkmenistan for 2018-2024” are underway.

In our country, state support for the protection of the health of mothers and children is systematically provided.

The approval last year by the Resolution of the esteemed President of the “National Strategy of Turkmenistan on the early child development for 2020-2025” has become the vivid confirmation to this.

Important health programmes being implemented, financial resources directed for the development of this sphere can serve the evidence of the priority in our country of caring for a person - the main wealth of the country. In the reporting year, the allocation of 2,072,413.2 thousand manats was provided for the development of this sphere, of which 2,067,015.1 thousand manats was spent, namely 99.7%.

The high milestones achieved in Turkmenistan in the field of healthcare were recognized by the international community. This resulted in the election of our country at a meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on organizational issues on May 7, 2019 as a member of three commissions concurrently, namely, the Executive Council of the World Food Programme for 2020-2022, the UN Commission on Population and Development for 2020-2024 and the UN Commission on narcotic drugs for 2020-2023.

It is worth to note that in this area there were no serious issues in view of the extensive work carried out in the field of protecting the health of citizens. However, although rare, there were appeals that expressed dissatisfaction with the work of this system. Thus, during the reporting year, the Ombudsperson's Office received five written appeals, which were examined in accordance with the requirements of the law.

The cultural rights of citizens in our country are regulated based on the Basic Law, dozens of existing laws and other legal acts. Over the past year, a lot of work has been done in the country's cultural sphere. Within the framework of the work envisaged in the "Programme for the Development of the sphere of culture in Turkmenistan for 2019-2025", various creative events were organized, including conferences, meetings, exhibitions and competitions, stage performances, musical celebrations and other events. Last year, the websites of institutions of the Ministry of Culture and branch departments were launched, on the Rovaçlyk website, information was presented on the country's achievements, cultural events, and historical and cultural monuments. This created an opportunity to familiarize the residents of our country and those living abroad with the history of Turkmen culture and today's achievements. The country's Constitution guarantees the right of everyone to participate in cultural life, the freedom of artistic, scientific and technical creativity. As it is known, Turkmenistan is a multinational country. In accordance with the current policies and legislation in the country, opportunities were created for representatives of other ethnicities living in the country to fully realize their cultural rights. The examples of the fact that they take an active part in such festivities held in the country as "Goňşy okara" (*The plate of goodies— a neighbour's share*), Nowruz, days and weeks of culture, various cultural competitions where they present their national performances. Last year, like the previous ones, was the year of commissioning and laying the foundation of cultural objects.

Last year, 479,871.2 thousand manats were allocated for the development of the country's culture, of which 476,530.6 thousand manats was spent, that is 99.3%. This shows that the state finances work in this area at a sufficient level. During the reporting period, no appeals about the cultural rights of citizens were received by the Ombudsperson's Office.

Chapter IV. Analysis of work with appeals of citizens

The activities of the Ombudsperson's institution, established to comply with the rigorous implementation of human rights in the country, as well as fulfillment of international obligations in the field of human rights, are regulated by the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson" based on the national Constitution. Article 18 of the Law stipulated that "within the limits of his/her competence the Ombudsperson shall consider the complaints of citizens of Turkmenistan, and foreign citizens, stateless persons, located in the territory of Turkmenistan, concerning the actions (inaction) and decisions of officials and organizations made, with regard to the infringement of their rights and freedoms ensured by the Constitution, other regulations and international agreements of Turkmenistan". Moreover, in article 19 of this Law, the right to appeal to the Ombudsperson is guaranteed if the complainant previously appealed these decisions, actions (inaction) through the legal or administrative proceedings, and disagreed with the adjudications of his claim. Chapter V of this Law stipulates special rules on the procedure and conditions for handling complaints, decisions taken on complaints, rights and obligations of the Ombudsperson in assisting in the restoration of violated rights and freedoms of man and citizen.

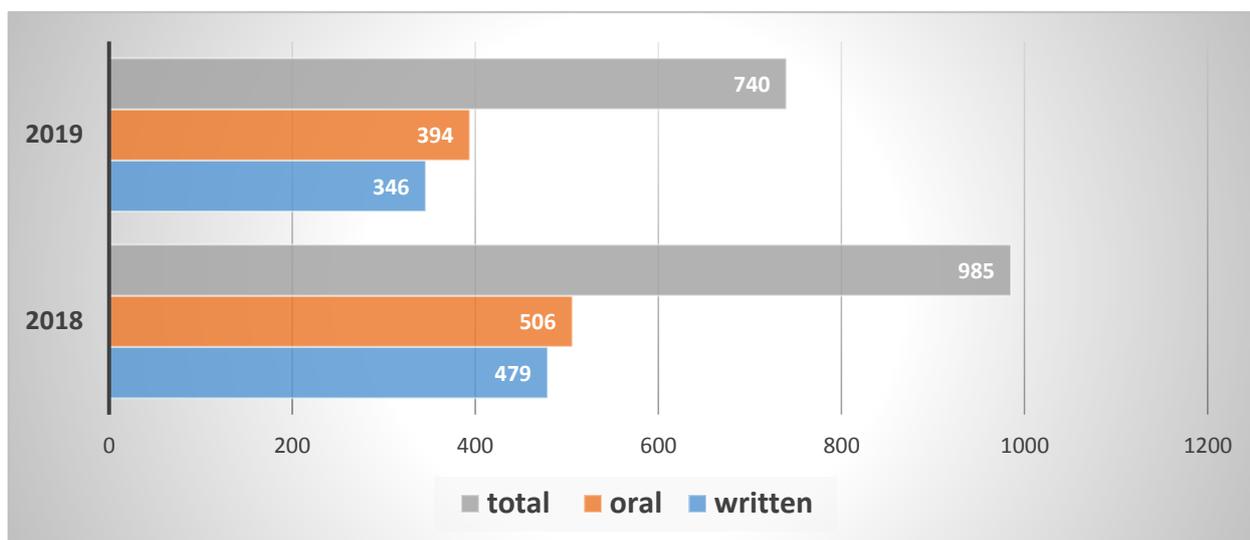
In accordance with the specified provisions of the Law, the Office of the Ombudsperson from the moment of its establishment, including in 2019, carried out work to consider applications submitted in written and oral forms.

Thus, in the analyzed year of 2019, the Office registered 346 written and 394 oral appeals.

The quarterly statistics for these appeals is as follows:

№	Types of appeal	I quarter	II quarter	III quarter	IV quarter	Total
1.	Written appeals	103	92	78	73	346
2.	Oral appeals	130	78	86	100	394
3.	Total No of appeals	233	170	164	173	740

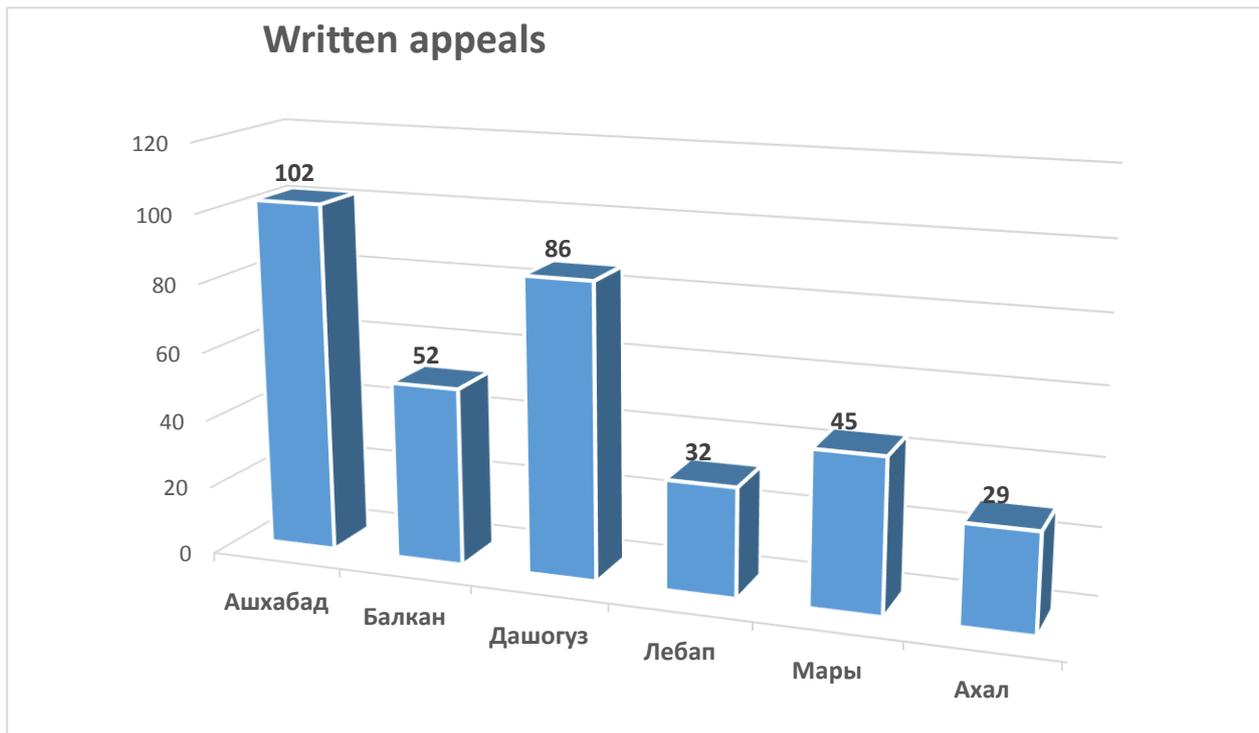
As can be seen from the above table, during the year the number of received requests in writing decreased. If in the second quarter the number of oral appeals decreased, then in recent quarters their number has increased. It should be noted here that in comparison with the figures of 2018, the number of appeals for the reporting year decreased, written appeals - by 27.8%, oral - by 22.1%



These figures were the result of explanatory work carried out by the Ombudsperson’s Office during the year, not only in the country’s centre or in the media, but also in the regions of the country, in order to increase awareness of the application procedure, including the procedure of addressing the Ombudsperson’s Office, remedy for citizens.

In order to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens in accordance with the provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan “On Administrative procedures”, citizens who contacted the Office of the Ombudsperson with written appeals, received answers with explanations; citizens who visited the Office of the Ombudsperson and citizens who visited receptions organized for them in regions received clarifications on the rights of appeal in administrative or judicial procedures of administrative acts or refusal to proceed, as well as on the actions or inactions of administrative bodies.

The following are the results of an analysis of written complaints received, by regions.



As can be seen from the figures, the majority of written requests received by the Ombudsman's Office, in particular 102 or 29.5%, were from residents of Ashgabat, 86 or 24.9% were from the Dashoguz welayat, 52 or 15.0% were from the Balkan welayat, 45 or 13.0% - Mary welayat, 32 or 9.2% - Lebap welayat and 29 or 8.4% - Ahal welayat.

In accordance with Article 21 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsman", when applying to the Ombudsman, privileges or restrictions on any grounds are not allowed.

When analyzing the number of written appeals, including collective appeals of citizens, the data was also analyzed by region of residence, by gender and nationality.

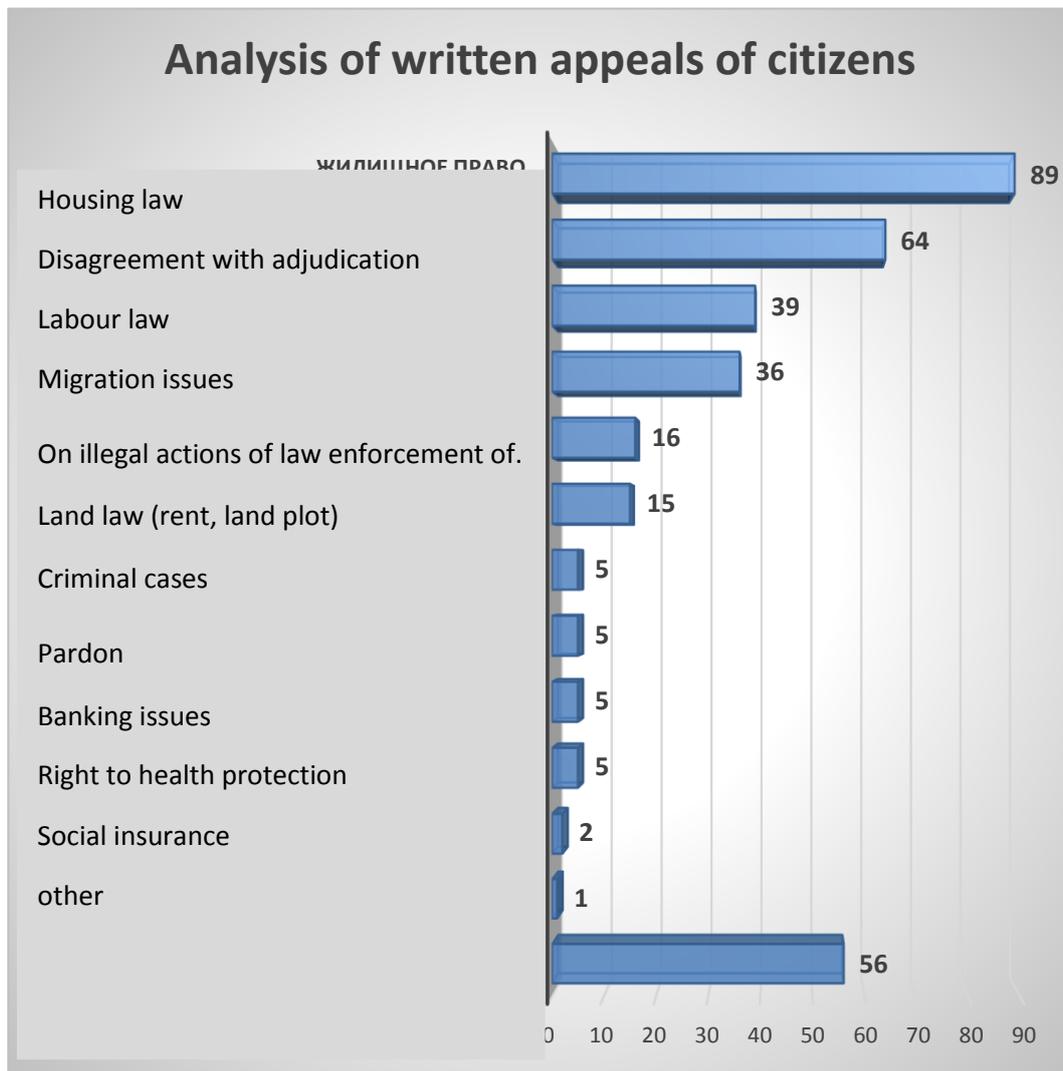
Ashgabat *Balkan* *Dashoguz* *Lebap* *Mary* *Ahal*

№	Regions	Total	Including	Nationality
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		1	fema le	male	Turkmen	Russian	Kazakh	Uzbek	Azerbaijani	Moldovan	Armenian	Lak	Tatar
1	Ashgabat	132	80	52	80	42	1	2	4	-	2	-	1
2	Balkan	84	42	42	69	2	-	-	1	-	7	2	3
3	Dashoguz	88	39	49	65	5	-	13	-	4	1	-	-
4	Lebap	32	21	11	26	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
5	Mary	57	25	32	55	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
6	Ahal	30	16	14	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Turkmen istan	423	223	200	325	52	1	20	5	4	10	2	4

As can be seen from the figures, the Office received appeals from representatives of various nationalities. In accordance with the provisions of the Law, the Office of the Ombudsperson conducts the record management in the state language of Turkmenistan. In addition, citizens who apply to the Ombudsperson have the right to apply in their native language or another language that they understand, and the answer will be given in the state language with a translation into the language they speak.

Citizens' appeals related to various issues, on which an analysis of their content by region was also conducted.



These figures do not include written appeals that have been combined with similar appeals previously accepted for proceedings and for which no answers have yet been given.

As can be seen from the analysis, the majority of the written complaints of citizens were appeals on housing issues, that is 89 of them, or 26.3% of the total number of appeals; complaints about disagreement with court decisions - 64 or 19.0%; on issues related to labour law - 39 or 11.5%; on migration issues - 36 or 10.6%; complaints of unlawful actions by law enforcement officials - 16 or 4.7%; on issues related to rental or land - 15 or 4.4%.

The remaining appeals related to pardon, criminal cases, the right to health, and banking issues, on each issue 5 or 1.5%, on pension issues - 2 or 0.6% and 1 - on the right to education, or 0.3%, 56 or 16.6% - on other issues.

When analyzing other issues, it was found that among them there were citizens' appeals on issues such as illegal actions by heads of organizations or officials, payment of wages at private enterprises, prosecution of people guilty of industrial injuries, assistance in recognizing diplomas, clarification of legislation, obtaining the necessary documents from institutions, organizations or dissatisfaction with the answers received, family disagreements, receiving alimony and other various issues.

In accordance with the provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson", written complaints received by the Office of the Ombudsperson were accepted for proceedings if the requirements of the legislation on the procedure and deadlines for filing complaints and their contents were complied with, and were examined in the established manner, and answers were given based on the results.

Complaints submitted without complying with the requirements of the law were not accepted for proceedings, the applicant was notified in writing about it within five days provided for by the law. In addition, on certain appeals, in accordance with the legislation, given answers were of a recommendatory nature with an explanation of the legal remedies.

Having fully studied the issues raised in complaints accepted for proceedings, the Ombudsperson's Office, on the basis of Article 27 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson", sent appeals to the competent state bodies, local self-government bodies and officials for assistance in verifying the arguments indicated therein. According to the results of the verifications and measures taken, citizens received appropriate answers.

Based on the results of the examined appeals, some of them were satisfied, and this will be available in the chapter of the Ombudsperson's report on requests and recommendations. During the analyzed period, one recommendation was given in accordance with Article 30 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson".

The table below shows the results of the analysis of complaints received by the Ombudsperson disaggregated by regions.

№	Region	Considered	Including	incl. satisfied	Answer	Not considered	Including				Remarks	
							No	Re	Issues	Expir		

	s	and referred to the relevant bodies	Art. 27	Art. 30								
1	Ashgabat	38	29	1	2	42	22	1	13	8	-	3
2	Balkan	22	19	-	4	13	15	6	1	6	2	1
3	Dashoguz	33	28	-	2	33	18	2	9	7	-	1
4	Lebap	14	12	-	-	13	6	1	3	1	1	-
5	Mary	13	11	-	-	18	12	4	4	4	-	1
6	Ahal	17	13	-	-	6	5	-	1	3	1	-
7	Turkmenistan	137	112	1	8	125	78	14	31	29	4	6

According to the above analysis, out of 346 written complaints received from all over the country for proceedings, 268 complaints were accepted, of which 113 or 42.2% were sent for consideration to the competent authorities, 112 of them were sent for verification of the arguments indicated in the complaints and one contained a recommendation. 107 out of the total number of requests were considered, of which 8 or 7.5% were satisfied, 78 not considered, 6 applications remained at the end of the year. Of the total 137 appeals sent out, 24 appeals were sent to the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan by affiliation.

When analyzing these indicators by region, 30 or 24.9% of the 120 applications received from Ashgabat, based on Articles 27 and 30 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson", were sent to the relevant authorities. Of these, 27 - examined and received relevant answers, 2 or 7.4% - satisfied, 3 - remained unexamined at the end of the year; in the Balkan welayat, out of 52 appeals, 19 or 36.5% were sent to the relevant authorities, of which 18 were examined, including 4 or 22.2% were satisfied, 1 remained at the end of the year; in Dashoguz welayat, 28 out of 86 or 32.6% were sent to the relevant authorities, 27 were considered, including 2 or 7.4% satisfied, and 1 remained unexamined at the end of the year; in the Lebap welayat, 12 out of 32 or 37.5% were sent to the relevant authorities, all

were examined, there were no satisfied appeals; in Mary welayat 11 out of 45 or 24.5% were sent for consideration to the relevant authorities, of which 10 were examined, there were no satisfied appeals, 1 remained at the end of the year; in the Ahal welayat 13 out of 29 or 44.8% were sent for consideration to the relevant authorities, all were examined, there were no satisfied applications. As for complaints sent to the Supreme Court of Turkmenistan, relevant answers were received and answers about their results were sent to the citizens.

As can be seen from the analysis, 31 or 9.0% of the received appeals were repeated, a significant part of which are from Ashgabat, in particular 13, and from the Dashoguz welayat - 9. Repeated applicants were notified that according to paragraph 4 of Article 22 of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson” their complaints were left without consideration. With reference to the relevant articles of the Law “On the Ombudsperson”, 14 unsigned appeals were also left without consideration, as well as 4 appeals due to the expiration of the terms of appeal to the Ombudsperson and 29 appeals, due to the fact that the issues in question did not fall within the competence of the Ombudsperson; the applicants were notified accordingly within 5 days, established by the law.

In addition, to 125 or 36.1% of the total number of appeals received by the Office, replies were sent explaining the remedy for their rights and freedoms, which in turn served them in resolving their issues in accordance with the law.

Earlier it was noted in the report that on appeals received for proceeding by the Ombudsperson’s Office, requests were sent to the relevant authorities for assistance in verifying the arguments indicated therein and the analysis of the results of the consideration of these complaints is given below.

№	Government authorities	Sent	Incl.		Expiration of terms	Reminders sent	Satisfied	Remaining appeals	
			Art 27	Art 30				27 ct.	30 ct.
1	Supreme Court of Turkmenistan	26	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	General Prosecutor’s Office of Turkmenistan	26	26	-	16	-	4	2	
3	Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan	6	6	-	1	-	-		
4	State Migration	17	17	-	2	-			

	Service of Turkmenistan								
5	State Border Service of Turkmenistan	1	1	-	-	-			
6	Ministry of Defence of Turkmenistan	3	3	-	1	-	-		
7	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of Turkmenistan	6	6		-	-			
8	Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan	1	1		-	-			
9	Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan	5	5		-	-			
10	Central Bank of Turkmenistan	5	5		2	2		2	
11	Dayhanbank	1	1		-	-			
12	State Concern Turkmennebit/Turkmenoil	1	1		1	-			
13	Hyakimlik of Ashgabat	12	11	1	11	1			
14	Hyakimlik of Balkan welayat	10	10	-	4	2	2	1	
15	Hyakimlik of Dashoguz welayat	5	5	-	1	-	2		
16	Hyakimlik of Lebap welayat	1	1	-	1	-			
17	Hyakimlik of Mary welayat	5	5	-	3	-		1	
18	Hyakimlik of Ahal welayat	6	6	-	6	-			
	TOTAL:	137	112	1	49	5	8	6	

As can be seen from the figures, out of 268 appeals received by the Office of the Ombudsperson for the consideration, 112 on the basis of Article 27 and 1 on the basis of Article 30 of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson” were sent

to the relevant authorities indicating the timing of their consideration, and 24 appeals were sent by affiliation to Supreme Court of Turkmenistan. According to 49 (35.8%) applications sent to the relevant authorities, replies were not received within the established timeframe. According to the analysis, there were violations of the deadlines for applications sent that were justified by the need to conduct additional or special checks for some of them. For example, based on Article 27 of the Law, out of 26 appeals referred to the General Prosecutor's Office to assist in verifying the facts of the appeal, the deadlines for consideration were violated for 16 of them, however, as the analysis of 11 appeals showed, an additional verification was required. Satisfactory answers were received on 4 appeals, of which 2 resulted in prosecution, thereby the legal rights of citizens who applied were restored.

In some cases, citizens' appeals were considered late due to the irresponsible attitude of the heads of institutions to the deadlines and the study of the referred appeals. On the one hand, such situations, namely, the violation of the deadlines stipulated by law for consideration of appeals, led to a violation of the terms for consideration of appeals by the Ombudsperson, and on the other hand, caused repeated appeals of citizens.

In such situations, written notifications were sent to the respective managers highlighting their obligation to give an answer.

As an example, the following information will be given here. The Ombudsperson's Office registered appeals on housing issues of residents of Ashgabat O.G., G.T., O.G. and Yo.S. and sent them for consideration to the hyakimlik of Ashgabat. Due to the fact that no answers were received in a timely manner to the referred appeals, during the analyzed year 2019, reminders were repeatedly made to the responsible officials of the Ashgabat city hyakimlik through the lines of communication, which were ineffective, in connection with which a reminder letter was sent on 09.05.2019.

In some cases, when considering referred appeals, there were also situations where the appeals were considered not on the merits and perfunctory answers were given.

For example, in his appeal a resident of the Balkan welayat M.S. indicated that to his repeated requests he received different information from his place of work and the hyakimlik about his priority for housing. In this regard, based on Article 27 of the Law, his appeal was sent to the hyakimlik of the Balkan welayat. Despite the fact that the main essence of his statement consisted of ascertaining the order of priority for housing, the welayat hyakimlik in the response sent to the Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that clarifications were given to M.S. that in accordance with the provisions of Article 66 of the Housing Code of Turkmenistan, in order to improve housing conditions, he needs to submit documents in the welayat

hyakimlik for queuing. This indicates that the answer was given without a thorough study of the essence of the citizen's appeal. A request was repeatedly sent to the welayat hyakimlik, pointing out the situation, with a request to give an answer on the content of the application. Because a response to the request was not received, the employees of the Ombudsperson's Office repeatedly contacted responsible officials of the welayat hyakimlik through the communication system. Due to the lack of results on 05.07.2019, a reminder letter was sent.

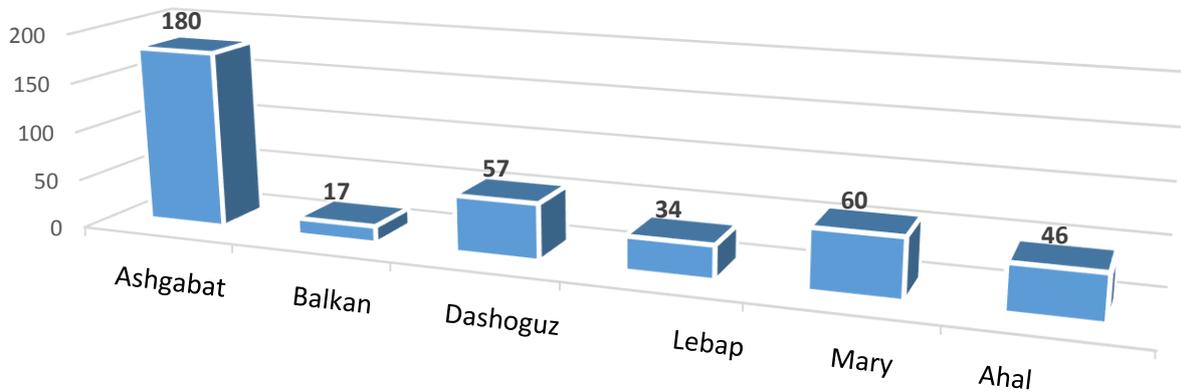
The statement by a resident of Dashoguz welayat T.S. about disagreement with the answer given to him by the banking institution regarding the assistance in sending money to children studying in the Russian Federation, on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was referred to the Central Bank of Turkmenistan. However, on 9 October 2019, the Central Bank sent a response both to the Ombudsperson's Office and the applicant with the enclosed copy of response from the banking institution, which the applicant referred to in the beginning. Such situation suggested that the responsible employees of the institution considered citizens' appeals without due diligence. The Ombudsperson again sent a letter to the Central Bank of Turkmenistan with a request to consider the citizen's application on the merits. However, no final response from the institution was received in a timely manner, due to which the citizen contacted various institutions on this issue, including repeatedly to the Ombudsperson's Office, enclosing a copy of the response from the bank. The Office of the Ombudsperson sent a reminder letter on 26 November 2019 to the Central Bank of Turkmenistan, pointing out the above circumstances.

There is another example of a similar situation when the banking sector did not give an answer in a timely manner, which led to repeated appeals of citizens.

A group of residents of house No. 77 on the Turkmenbashy Shayoly of Ashgabat appealed on the issue that their house, previously on the bank Senagat balance sheet, currently was not accepted at anyone's balance, which made it difficult to maintain the 12-story building, as there were frequent breakdowns of the lift, or it did not work at all neither serviced by any organization. This appeal was sent to the Central Bank on 24 August 2019 with reference to Article 27 of the Law, but no response was received within the specified time, which was the reason for its untimely consideration by the Office and, ultimately, led to the repeated appeal of citizens. On October 18, 2019, a reminder was sent along with the repeated complaint attached to it. Due to the fact that no answers were received to the previous and last letters sent by the Ombudsperson, the appeal of citizens remained unexamined by the end of the year.

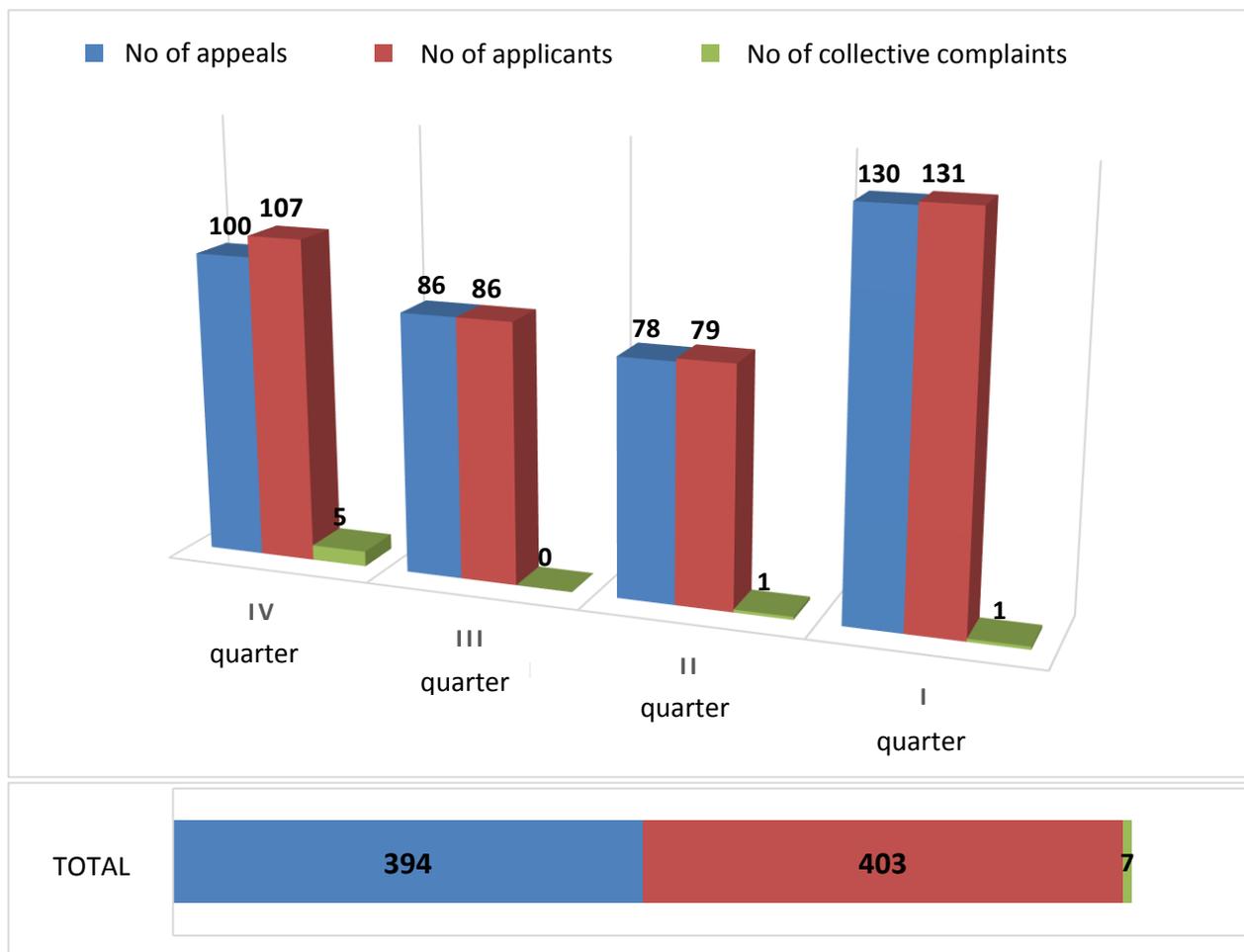
During the reporting year, the Office of the Ombudsperson registered 394 oral complaints. These complaints were also analyzed by regions.

Oral appeals



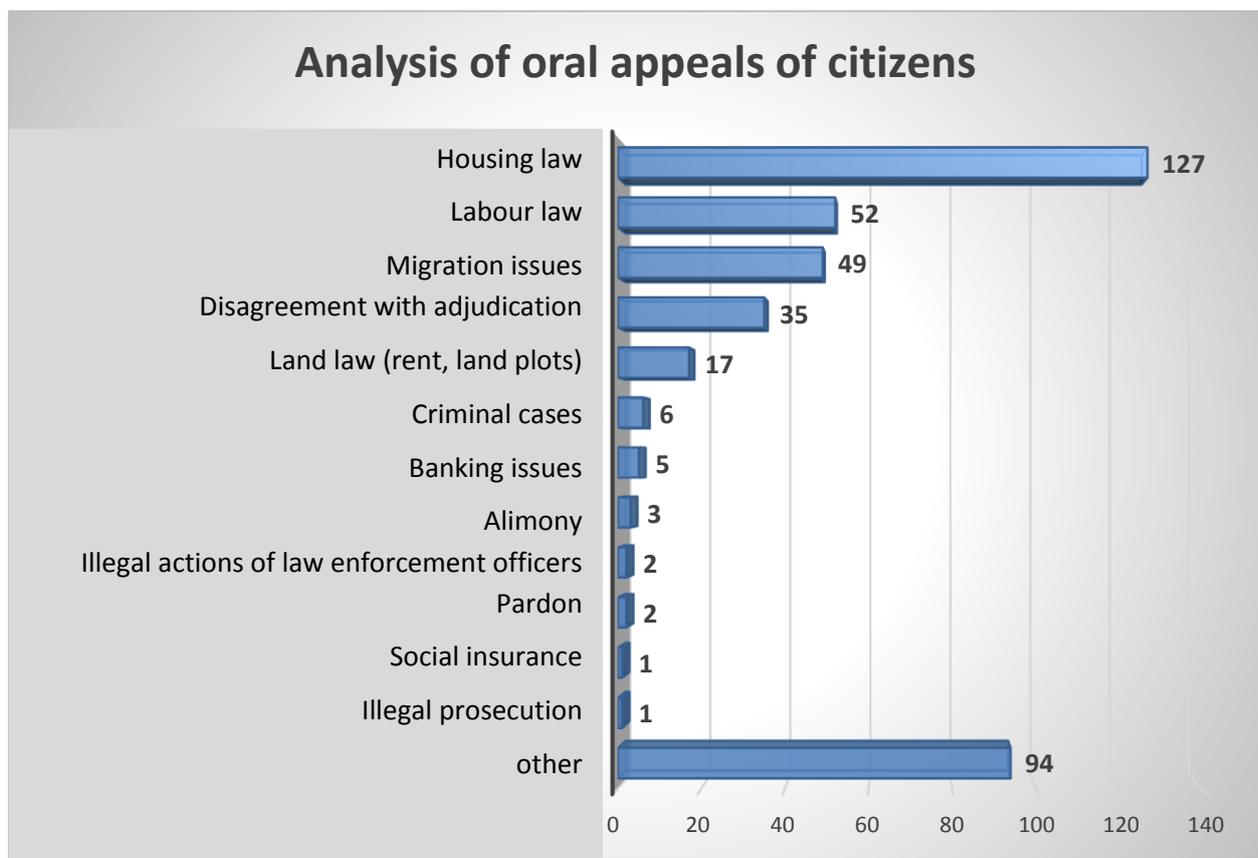
As can be seen from the analysis, the main part of the oral complaints, in particular, 180 or 45.7%, were from Ashgabat. It should be specifically noted that because the Office of the Ombudsperson is located in the centre, in the city of Ashgabat, it seems convenient for citizens to contact.

These appeals were analyzed by the number of applicants and were presented quarterly in the chart below.



As it is shown, 394 oral appeals were registered during the year. In addition, according to the analysis of applicants disaggregated by gender, nationality and other characteristics, out of 403 applicants, 252 were women, 151 were men, and these were representatives of different nationalities. Of these, Turkmen - 315; Russians - 44; Uzbeks - 18; Azerbaijanis - 10; Armenians - 5; Ukrainians - 2; Kurds - 2; Kazakhs - 2; the remaining 5 citizens are Lak, Tatar, Baloch, Lezgin, and Romany. An analysis of citizens with appeals has shown that equal opportunities were created for everyone to exercise their rights.

In addition, an analysis of the subject of appeals of citizens was made:



As can be seen from the analysis, most of oral appeals of citizens - 127 or 32.2% of the total number were related to the housing issues, labour issues - 52 or 13.2%; migration issues - 49 or 12.4%, disagreement with adjudication - 35 or 8.8%, land law, in particular, issues related to rent and land parcels - 17 or 4.3%. The remaining 94 issues, which made up 23.8%, were mainly related to clarification of legislation, debt recovery, and illegal actions of heads of institutions, obtaining licenses, and returning a military ID or passport.

In accordance with the approved Work plan of the Ombudsperson, reception of citizens with oral appeals was also organized in the regions of the country, receptions were held for citizens together with members of commissions specially established in the hyakimliks of welayats on the basis of the Resolution “On the

creation of special working commissions on citizens' appeals". Reception of citizens by the Ombudsperson in welayats was publicized in the media.

Receptions in the regions of the country in the analyzed year were organized in 2 stages, a total of 170 citizens were received, of which 52 in Mary welayat, 49 in Lebap welayat, 31 in Dashoguz welayat, and 19 in each of Ahal and Balkan welayats. Appeals mainly related to housing, labour and land issues. Receptions on the ground positively affect the consideration of issues of citizens. Some of them have been addressed satisfactorily.

For example, a resident of Lebap welayat G.E. argued that, despite his higher education and the availability of a job referral, he could not get a job. An instruction was given to the responsible employee of the hyakimlik's Labour and Employment Department in this regard, and according to a response received later, the applicant was assigned to the post of apprentice mechanic for repair of water supply systems in the Water supply Department of the "Lebapwelayatagyzsuv/Lebap fresh water supply Association (order No. 541-d of 02.12.2019).

Appeal from a resident of the Ahal welayat O.Ch. with a request for the installation of a water pipe for drinking water supply to a residential building was studied with the participation of relevant specialists, and according to the information presented later, employees of the "Tejenagyzsuv/Tejen fresh water supply Department installed a water supply pipe system, thereby satisfying the citizen's appeal.

Another resident of the same welayat G.M. posed the question that despite the fact that she was among the first of the persons with disabilities to be provided with appropriate housing from the State Fund, the issue had not been resolved for a long time. According to the decision of the housing allocation commission, the applicant, together with her family members, was provided with housing within the city of Tedjen, her appeal was granted.

Chapter V. Activities of the Ombudsperson to help improve the national legislation of Turkmenistan

During 2019, consistent work was carried out to improve and strengthen the country's regulatory framework in order to ensure the protection of guaranteed rights and freedoms of man and citizen. At the beginning of the year, on 7 February 2019, according to established tradition, the esteemed President of Turkmenistan met with deputies of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan. At the meeting he put forward his initiatives on the main directions of legislative activity of deputies. In particular, he noted that for the full implementation of the "Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the socio-economic development of the country for 2019-2025", approved on 1 February the same year, in the context of a new stage in the development of modern market relations, deputies have important tasks on

reforming the legal system of Turkmenistan, improving existing legislation, developing and adopting new laws that meet generally recognized norms of international law.

Over the past year, new laws have been adopted, including laws on amendments and additions to existing laws, a total of 65. Among the adopted laws governing various areas there were, in particular, the Laws of Turkmenistan “On Environmental Audit”, “On Rationalization Activities”, “On Trademarks”, “On Appellations of origin of goods”, “On Psychological services”, “On Civil status acts”, as well as new versions of the Laws of Turkmenistan “On the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan”, “On Licensing certain types of activities”. Dozens of laws, as noted above, with the aim of strengthening the legal framework of the multifaceted transformational programmes that were under way, have been improved through the introduction of changes and amendments.

One of the important tasks of the Ombudsperson is to assist in improving the legislation of Turkmenistan in the field of rights and freedoms of man and citizen. This task is regulated by one of the certain chapters of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”. Thus, in order to achieve this goal over the past year, the Ombudsperson, within her competence, took part in the legislative activity of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan.

In particular, representatives of the Ombudsperson’s Office, being members of working groups for the preparation of drafts of a new version of the Administrative Procedure Code of Turkmenistan, the Arbitration Procedure Code of Turkmenistan, the Civil Code of Turkmenistan, the Code of Turkmenistan on Administrative Offenses and the draft Law of Turkmenistan “On the prevention of offenses” took an active part in the sittings. In addition, over the past year, in order to improve other existing laws and codes, they studied draft laws of Turkmenistan “On changes and amendments to certain legislative acts”.

One more related historical event that took place during the past year should be noted – that is the launch of constitutional reform. In particular, work has started on introducing amendments and changes to the Constitution - the Basic Law of Turkmenistan. As noted above, in his historical speech at the second meeting of the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan, held on 25 September 2019, the esteemed President of Turkmenistan put forward an initiative, given the importance of further development of the legislative system and improving the efficiency of legislative activity, on the expediency of switching to a bicameral system and uniting the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan and the Mejlis of Turkmenistan with the system of bodies that implement the tasks of the representative legislative branch. This will allow for representation of the interests of all sectors of Turkmen society. The proposal of the esteemed President was supported by all the meeting participants.

Based on this, by the Decree of the Head of state, a Constitutional Commission was established to develop and consolidate proposals in connection with changes and amendments to the Constitution of Turkmenistan and its composition was approved. It should be noted that over the past year, the Ombudsperson participated in the work of the Constitutional Commission, and representatives of the Ombudsperson's Office participated in the work of the working group established by the Commission.

Also, in the reporting year, the Office, as part of local activities to raise awareness and advocacy of human rights, with the participation of deputies of the Mejlis, clarified the norms of existing laws, the monitoring of laws was continued on the ground along with joint discussion of proposals for their improvement.

Chapter VI. Participation of the Ombudsperson in public events. Promotion of human rights awareness

During the reporting period, various events were held associated with the broad-scale positive transformations carried out in the country as well as the international fora. The Ombudsperson, along with the fulfillment of her official duties, took part in these events. The activities were carried out in accordance with the approved work plan of the Office of the Ombudsperson for 2019. In particular, throughout the year, activities were carried out in all regions of the country aimed at assisting in raising awareness in the field of human rights.

As it is known, as a result of a humane policy implemented by the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, the rights and freedoms of all citizens living in the country are guaranteed and protected. Good case in point is the fact that almost every year thousands of people receive citizenship of Turkmenistan. This humane tradition was continued last year. By decree of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan 863 people were naturalized as citizens of Turkmenistan.

On the occasion of this significant event, on 26 September 2019, a ceremony was held to present passports to naturalized citizens in the conference hall of the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan, with the participation of the heads of UN regional agencies and representative offices in our country, as well as the heads of relevant government authorities of the country. The Ombudsperson also took part in this solemn ceremony.

In accordance with the provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson", in order to fulfill obligations to facilitate the organization of interaction between state bodies in the field of human rights, the Ombudsperson actively participated in meetings of the Interagency commission to ensure the fulfillment of Turkmenistan's international obligations on human rights and international humanitarian law. Over the past year, the Ombudsperson took part in

three meetings of the Interagency commission, expressing her opinion on a number of important issues on the agenda, primarily affecting the implementation of international obligations on human rights and freedoms, the preparation of national reports to international organizations and the improvement of the country's legal framework .

As it is known, on 18 July 2019, at the headquarters of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on organizational issues, the first phase of the presentation of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) of Turkmenistan on the implementation of the SDGs was successfully held as part of the High-level Political Forum.

In this regard, on 28 August 2019, a conference was held in the administrative building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan with the participation of heads of diplomatic representations and missions accredited in Turkmenistan, where the results of the presentation of the VNR and follow-up steps in this area were discussed. The Ombudsperson also participated in the forum.

It should also be noted that over the past year, the Ombudsperson, within her competence, and the staff of the Office took an active part in meetings on the SDGs adaptation in Turkmenistan held by the working group established on the basis of the Decree of the President of Turkmenistan No. 438 of 17 November 2017 “On activities to adapt in Turkmenistan the SDGs adopted by the United Nations member countries”.

The Ombudsperson and the staff of the Office also took part in the events held by other state bodies. Thus, over the past year, the Ombudsperson participated in the meetings of the Mejlis, and the representative of the Office in the first ever Conference of Judges of Turkmenistan.

Within the powers of the Ombudsperson to assist in raising awareness and knowledge of the population on human rights and freedoms, according to the approved work plan of the Office of the Ombudsperson, relevant work was carried out.

In particular, seminars in higher education institutions were continued. Over the past year, at the Scientific and Methodological Centre for SDGs under the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, the staff of the Ombudsperson’s Office held three workshops on human rights, as well as on the official duties of the Ombudsperson and her activities.

In addition, representatives of the Ombudsperson’s Office attended a conference on the 28th anniversary of Independence of Turkmenistan, which was held by the Academy of State Service under the President of Turkmenistan. They addressed

the students of the Academy and exchanged views on the institution of the authorized representative for human rights, its background, ongoing activities, as well as on the norms of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”.

The Office of the Ombudsperson together with the representative office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Turkmenistan continued to conduct seminars in the regions of the country on children's rights. These workshops were organized as part of the work plan for 2018-2019 between the Ombudsperson and the UNICEF in Turkmenistan. In accordance with the agenda of the seminars, participants were familiarized with the norms of the UN Convention "On the Rights of the Child", as well as the rules for submitting national reports on Turkmenistan's implementation of its provisions, recommendations of the relevant UN committees, work carried out in our country to study and implement them. Along with this, the participants of the seminars were acquainted with the work carried out to fulfill the tasks of the “National Action Plan in Turkmenistan for the realization of children's rights for 2018-2022”.

All seminars were organized in Resource centres for Human Rights located in higher education institutions of all welayats. Responsible workers, whose job responsibilities include working with children and youth, as well as representatives of the media and public organizations took part in them.

Articles about meetings on the rights of youth and children held by the Ombudsperson in Resource centres for human rights were published in local media, in particular in welayat newspapers.

As it is known, the Ombudsperson annually submits to the President of Turkmenistan a report on her activities and on human rights situation in the country. This report is also delivered to the Mejlis of Turkmenistan. In this regard, the Ombudsperson took part in the meeting of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan of the sixth convocation on 8 June 2019, and in accordance with the agenda of the meeting, made a report on the activities of the Ombudsperson in 2018 and on the human rights situation in the country.

The annual report on the activities of the Ombudsperson was publicized in the media of Turkmenistan and in the electronic newspapers of the State News Agency of Turkmenistan “Turkmenistan Today” and “Golden Age”,

In addition, representatives of the Office participated in the TV programme “Society and the Law”, jointly prepared with the Mejlis of Turkmenistan and the Altyn Asyr TV channel and presented the report.

Moreover, representatives of the Ombudsperson’s Office presented relevant publications on important socio-political events in the country in the central media.

Thus, in the “Turkmenistan” newspaper, articles were published on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of Independence of Turkmenistan, and on an important socio-political event - a meeting of the Halk Maslahaty, and in the "Neutral Turkmenistan" newspaper materials dedicated to the Constitution of Turkmenistan and International Children's Day were published.

Chapter VII. International co-operation

Within the framework of the wise foreign policy of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, in 2019 held under the motto “Turkmenistan is the Motherland of Prosperity”, the prestige of our neutral state has steadily continued to grow in the international arena. Following this course, our country steadily and confidently pursues a policy based on the principles of positive neutrality, peacefulness, “open doors”, good neighborliness and equal mutually beneficial co-operation.

Maintaining close ties with international and regional organizations is one of the key aspects of Turkmenistan’s foreign policy, specifically with such recognized international organizations as the United Nations, through its specialized agencies, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States and others.

In this regard, Turkmenistan representing the policy of peace and stability always comes up with constructive initiatives aimed at consolidating common efforts to address urgent problems of our time, for which it has received wide recognition and support from the world community.

In accordance with the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, one of the main functions of the Ombudsperson is to promote the development of international co-operation in the field of human and civil rights and freedoms.

The progressive dynamics of the partnership of the Ombudsperson’s Office with international organizations for the protection of rights and freedoms of man and citizen also continued to intensify in the reporting period, among which the UNICEF Country Office in Turkmenistan, and UN OHCHR in Central Asia, UNDP Country Office in Turkmenistan, as well as the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, the German Society for International Co-operation (GIZ) and others.

During the reporting period, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan held a number of bilateral meetings with heads and representatives of international organizations, representatives of foreign states. The following meetings were held: with the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Mr. Peter Burian and his political adviser Ms. Martina Schmidt, the head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat Amb. Natalia Drozd, the UN Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan Mrs. Elena Panova, the

Regional Representative of the Office of the UNHCHR for Central Asia, Mr. Richard Komenda, and the National Programme Coordinator of the UNHCHR, Regional Office for Central Asia Mr. Bakai Albanov, the Head of the WHO Country Office in Turkmenistan Dr. Paulina Karwowska, acting UNDP Representative in Turkmenistan Ms. Natia Natsvlshvili, independent consultant on the UN programme evaluation in Turkmenistan Mr. Zehra Kachapor Jihich, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to Turkmenistan Nighthart Höfer-Wissing, representatives of the UNODC Regional Representative Office in Central Asia, the EBRD representatives Mr. Anders Franzen, Ms. Victoria Nesterovaite, Ms. Louise Balbi, delegation led by Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament Mr. Ettore Rosato, international expert of the UNDP Country Office in Turkmenistan Mr. George Tugushi, and bilateral Turkmen-American political dialogue and the following “Turkmenistan-EU” dialogue on human rights.

During a series of bilateral meetings with leaders and representatives of international organizations, foreign diplomatic entities, a thorough exchange of views took place on the prospects for co-operation on human and civil rights and freedoms, including through the implementation of new joint projects and plans. At the same time, the high interest of foreign partners in enhancing co-operation with the Office of the Ombudsperson was confirmed.

The meetings held with representatives of international organizations included both the meetings with established partners and with newly appointed representatives. Among them, a meeting with the former head of the UNICEF in Turkmenistan, Ms. Shahin Nilofer, who completed her mission in the country, and the new head of the UNICEF in Turkmenistan Ms. Kristin Weigand.

The meetings discussed close co-operation between UNICEF and the Ombudsperson’s Office of Turkmenistan. It was also emphasized that the realization of children's rights, the protection of their rights and freedoms, due attention and promotion of their interests, are among the priorities of our state, which is a member of the UNICEF Executive Council for 2018-2020.

It is to be recalled that in the framework of the Co-operation Programme between Turkmenistan and the UNICEF for 2016-2020, a work plan for 2018-2019 was signed between the Office of the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan and UNICEF.

In the reporting period, the activities envisaged in the second part of the plan continued, namely, in October-November 2019, the Ombudsperson together with the UNICEF held a series of workshops to raise awareness of the rights of children and youth. The workshops were held in all five welayats, where senior government officials were invited to participate, whose job responsibilities included working

with children and youth. Representatives of relevant government agencies, public organizations and the media attended these events.

The agenda of the workshops included presentations of the “National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Rights of Children in Turkmenistan for 2018-2022” and its goals, the measures taken as part of its implementation, sessions on the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implementation norms at the national level, the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

As was mentioned, one of the key partners of the Ombudsperson is the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, co-operation with which bears special significance. The OSCE Centre in Ashgabat attached special importance to the project on “Supporting the development of the Ombudsperson’s Office’s capacity”, one of the joint projects planned for implementation in 2019, as the priority of its human rights dimension.

It is important to note that 2019 was a landmark year in the co-operation between Turkmenistan and the OSCE. It was marked by the 20th anniversary of the opening of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat. In honour of this anniversary, an international conference was held on 16 April 2019, during which the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan delivered a congratulatory speech and highlighted the importance of constructive co-operation between the OSCE and the Ombudsperson.

Thus, in the framework of co-operation, on 12-13 November 2019, the Office of the Ombudsperson together with the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat held a two-day seminar on the “Ways to improve co-operation for the promotion and protection of human rights in Turkmenistan”. Representatives from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the Head of the Human rights Department Mr. Omer Fisher, and junior programme adviser from the Human Rights Department Ms. Marine Constant were invited to the seminar as international experts. The seminar was attended by deputies of the Mejlis, representatives of various ministries and agencies, as well as the Bar Association. This event enabled participants to discuss ways to further improve the protection and promotion of human rights in Turkmenistan.

During the past year, representatives of the Office of the Ombudsperson took an active part in seminars organized by the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, such as “Models for TV funding in the 21st century,” “Principles for effective assistance to victims of trafficking in persons,” and “Rabat Memorandum on best practices of effective anti-terrorism practices in the criminal justice sector”, “Reforming media laws in the digital age”, “Economic benefits of labour migration: OSCE best practices”, “Modern approaches to journalist education”.



*Meeting with the Public Defender of rights (Ombudsperson) of Slovakia
Maria Patakyova*

As part of the project of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat “Supporting the Development of the Ombudsperson’s Office’s Capacity”, a visit of the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan and staff to the Republic of Slovakia took place on 17-18 December 2019. The purpose of the visit was to exchange experience with the Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsperson) of Slovakia Maria Patakyova and familiarization with the activities of the national human rights institution of this country. During the visit, they discussed mechanisms for considering citizens' appeals, interaction with state bodies and non-governmental organizations, protecting the rights of vulnerable groups of people, as well as organizational and structural issues of the Office.

During the visit, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan also met with deputies of the National Council (Parliament) of the Slovak Republic, Chairperson of the Committee on social affairs Alena Bashistova, Chairperson of the Committee for incompatibility of posts Vladimir Sloboda and member of this committee Magdalena Kucianova. During the meeting, a thorough exchange of views on interaction of the Parliament with the Office of the Public defender of rights took place. Also, in the course of the conversation, deputies of the National Council were informed about a wide-scale transformational social policy implemented by

the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, aimed at ensuring the social welfare of citizens, protecting their rights and interests.

In the framework of the regional programme on “Promotion of legal statehood in the countries of Central Asia” of the (GIZ), from 21 to 27 January 2019, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan participated in a study tour to the Federal Republic of Germany; as part of the Turkmen delegation, who are members of the working group to develop comments on the Law of Turkmenistan “On Administrative procedures”. They visited the Federal Financial court of Germany, the Administrative court of Berlin, as well as other institutions where the delegation was acquainted with the German experience in the legal regulation of judicial and administrative appeals.

An equally important event was the participation of the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan in the 75th session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held in Bangkok from 27 to 31 May 2019. The session was dedicated to the “Empowering people and ensuring universal inclusion and equality”. During the session, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan made a presentation on “Empowering and ensuring the rights and opportunities of people in Turkmenistan, and the country's social and economic development within the framework of the SDG agenda”. This platform allows exchanging views on new and relevant issues related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development.

As the continuation of active co-operation in the international arena, it should be noted that in the reporting year, interaction with national human rights institutions of the Central Asian countries intensified. For example, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan participated in the International Practical Conference on “Commissioner for Human Rights in the Republic of Tajikistan: Achievements and Prospects” dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsperson of Tajikistan and at the meeting of the Ombudspersons of Central Asia as part of the OHCHR/UNDP Initiative to Support national human rights institutions in Central Asia (CASI-NHRI), which took place from 20 to 22 May in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

Then, on 24-25 June 2019, the third Regional Consultation of Central Asian National Human Rights Institutions was held in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, focused on discussing and finalizing the Roadmap project. Following the consultations, the human rights ombudspersons of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan signed the Roadmap for regional co-operation between National Human Rights Institutions of Central Asia.



Meeting of the Central Asian Ombudspersons within the framework of the OHCHR/ UNDP Initiative to Support National Human Rights Institutions in Central Asia (CASI-NHRI).

The adopted roadmap is a kind of platform where the Ombudspersons of the Central Asian countries are provided with the opportunity to exchange experiences and conduct joint regional events. In addition, as part of the consultations, a seminar was held on the “Human Rights for Sustainable Development” with experts from the OHCHR of Geneva and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR). Such a format for the meeting of the Central Asian Ombudspersons is very important for enhancing the capacity for multilateral and bilateral co-operation between national human rights institutions.

On 5-6 September 2019, the Ombudsperson of Turkmenistan, as part of a delegation from Turkmenistan, participated in the Second Regional Conference on the right to establish a legal personality and prevention of statelessness “Leaving no one behind at birth”, which was held in the city of Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. The conference was organized by the Office of the Ombudsperson in the Republic of Kazakhstan jointly with the Office of the UNHCR to discuss progress and gaps in ensuring birth registration and the right to citizenship for all children born in countries.



Second regional conference on the right to establish a legal personality and prevention of statelessness “Leaving no one behind at birth ”

During the reporting period, the staff of the Ombudsman’s Office actively participated in many conferences, seminars, workshops and round tables on various topics, among which a considerable number was devoted to combating trafficking in persons.

Thus, on 24-25 June 2019, the staff of the Office of the Ombudsman took part in a seminar on the preparation and conduct of a number of events dedicated to the International Day against Trafficking in Human Beings, organized by the UNODC in Turkmenistan. The aim of the seminar was to strengthen the capacity of national partners for the effective planning and implementation of public awareness campaigns to prevent human trafficking.

On 27-28 March 2019, the staff of the Ombudsman took part in the training on the topic of international migration and the protection of the rights of migrants and victims of human trafficking, organized by the Representative Office of the International Organization for Migration in Turkmenistan (IOM). The main purpose of the training was to raise awareness of state institutions and public organizations working in the field of migration on the importance of international

legal instruments in migration management and existing national legal acts on migration and human trafficking.

During the reporting period, staff of the Office also participated in other seminars organized by the IOM in Turkmenistan. These are seminars that were held in August 2019, during which the presentation of a training manual for teachers and students of educational institutions on the precaution and prevention of human trafficking among young people, as well as in September 2019 for representatives of the diplomatic and consular services of Turkmenistan abroad, aimed at strengthening capacity in identifying potential cases of trafficking in persons, identification of victims of trafficking in persons and their referral.

From February to May, webinars were held for the staff of the Office, which were coordinated by the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. The webinars included presentations on tools for the NHRIs focused on children's rights, as well as a number of good NIHR practices for promoting and protecting children's rights.

On 3 May 2019, representatives of the Office participated in a workshop held by UNICEF on managing the state budget to achieve the SDGs for children, with the participation of experts from Oxford Policy Management (OPM). As part of the UN Global Road Safety Week, held annually in May, on 7 May 2019, the Ombudsperson's staff took part in a roundtable discussion on the "Partnership in Road Safety" organized by the UN Resident Coordinator in Turkmenistan and the WHO CO .

In addition, on 1 June 2019, the staff took part in an event dedicated to the International Children's Day organized by UNICEF in Turkmenistan.

In October, the staff of the Ombudsperson actively participated in consultations on identifying the strategic priorities and results of the new Framework Programme for Sustainable Development Co-operation between Turkmenistan and the UN for 2021-2025. Also, on 16 October a representative of the Office took part in the event on the occasion of the presentation of the main annual report of UNICEF on the situation of children in the world.

In November of the reporting year, the staff of the Office participated in two celebrations, on 20 November: on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, held in the conference hall of the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan, and on 29 November dedicated to the 50th anniversary of UNFPA and the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on population and development on "Government of Turkmenistan and UNFPA: Partnership for the empowerment of all". Later that month, there were working meetings on the development of a methodology for indicators of the

SDGs, as well as a series of meetings to review the goals and indicators of the SDGs, updating the matrix on socio-economic issues.

In November 2019, the X International Scientific and Practical conference on Administrative Law "Participants in the administrative procedure and administrative process" was held in Ashgabat. The conference addressed issues of state-civil interaction in a market economy, where dozens of lawyers from Central Asian countries participated, including the staff of the Ombudsperson's Office.

In December, the staff of the Ombudsperson's Office took part in round tables organized by the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan to discuss the next steps in implementing the "National Strategy of Turkmenistan on the early child development for 2020-2025" and the "National Action Plan in Turkmenistan to combat trafficking in persons at 2020-2022", which were adopted in December 2019 on the eve of the round tables.

Throughout the reporting year, a representative of the Office of the Ombudsperson participated in meetings, seminars and round tables of the working group of the Interagency commission to ensure the implementation of Turkmenistan's international obligations on human rights and international humanitarian law.

Over the past year, co-operation with the Regional Office of the UNHCHR for Central Asia has acquired a new quality. During the reporting year, numerous meetings were held with the OHCHR Regional Representative for Central Asia, Mr. Richard Komenda, during which a number of priority areas for co-operation in the field of human rights were discussed. Among the issues discussed at the meeting, was a series of joint events to be held.

This had become the impetus for the joint round table on "The role and mandate of the Ombudsperson Institution. Human Rights Monitoring", which took place on 11 December 2019. The purpose of this round table was aimed at raising the awareness of government authorities, including law enforcement, about the role and mandate of the Ombudsperson institution and tools for protecting human rights. The round table programme also included the future tasks and plans of the Office of the Ombudsperson, during the discussion of which interesting deliberations took place.

It should also be noted that in honour of Human Rights Day, on 9-10 December a forum was held on the "Human Rights Education", which was organized by the Institute of State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan, UNDP and OHCHR. The forum featured presentations on international norms on human rights education, an overview of international practices and practice of Turkmenistan in the field of human rights education, where the staff of the Ombudsperson's Office actively participated.



Participation of the Ombudsperson in the forum on “Human Rights Education”

In the reporting period, representatives of the Office also participated in various international events and seminars. For instance, from 26 to 30 August 2019, an employee of the Office of the Ombudsperson participated in a study tour on administrative law within the regional programme on “Promoting legal statehood in Central Asian countries”, organized by the GIZ. During the study tour, a visit was made to the Higher Administrative Court of the Federal State of Hamburg and the Administrative Court of Hamburg, and to the higher educational institution of Hamburg, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, which facilitated learning the experience of administrative procedure law in Germany.

From 18 to 21 November 2019, the OSCE Centre in Ashgabat, within the framework of the project on “Co-operation in the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2016–2020 and the preparation of a new NHRAP for the period after 2020 regarding the rights of national minorities”, organized a study visit of a delegation from Turkmenistan, including a representative of the Office of the Ombudsperson in Vilnius, Republic of Lithuania.

During the visit, a representative of the Office visited the Department of national minorities under the Government of Lithuania, the House of national minorities in the Sejma (Parliament) and the municipality of Visagi District, as well as the House of Polish Culture and the Belarusian Francis Skorina Gymnasium in Vilnius, where he got acquainted with the experience of addressing issues of

national minorities, discussed legislation and the activities of bodies aimed at promoting the culture of national minorities.

This was followed by the participation of a representative of the Office from 26 to 27 November at the annual TransMonEE conference (Transformational Monitoring for More Effective Social Justice), which was held in Vienna, Austria. UNICEF together with the EU Agency for fundamental rights organized the conference, where experts from ministries and departments of Europe and Central Asia, as well as experts from international organizations, were invited. The main purpose of the meeting was to approve a set of key indicators, including definitions and methodologies that would facilitate national systems for monitoring the protection of children's rights and streamline the implementation of obligations.

Therefore, the past reporting year was marked by broad, multifaceted co-operation with international organizations and national human rights institutions, which contributed to achieving a progressive level in the protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, the exchange of experience, and increasing the capacity of employees of the human rights institution.

In this context, it should be noted that the Office of the Ombudsperson will henceforth continue to make efforts to develop broad international co-operation in the name of achieving common goals in the field of human rights.

Chapter VIII. Requests and recommendations of the Ombudsperson

As previously noted, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 18 of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, the Ombudsperson considers citizens’ complaints within his/her competence. According to Article 27 of the Law, after receipt of a complaint for the proceedings in the manner prescribed by law, the Ombudsperson has the right to apply to the competent state bodies, local self-government bodies and officials for assistance in verifying it.

In accordance with the provisions of this article, the organizations to which complaints are referred should inform the Ombudsperson about the results of the audit and the measures taken to identify violations of the rights of the applicant by the deadline set by the Ombudsperson. In cases of the establishment of a violation of the rights and freedoms of man and citizen, the Ombudsperson, on the basis of Article 30 of the Law, shall address the authorized state bodies or relevant officials with a recommendation containing proposals for taking the necessary measures, with a response within one month, in which they should report on the implementation of the proposals contained in the recommendation.

In this regard, during the analyzed year, some of the complaints received by the Office of the Ombudsperson and accepted for proceeding, based on the above Article 27 of the Law, were sent to the competent authorities to assist in their

verification; on the basis of Article 30 of the Law, one recommendation was made. The report would like to draw your attention to some of the appeals examined in accordance with the provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, on which verifications were carried out and satisfactory feedbacks were received.

In the course of the inspections carried out at the request of citizens, cases of violation of their rights to work, receipt of wages in proportion to the work performed, guaranteed by the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the Labour Code and other regulatory legal acts were established.

For example, the collective complaint of a resident of the Dashoguz welayat K.S. and 8 more citizens, which stated that having worked as machine operators in the Dostluk Association of the etrap named after S. A. Niyazov they did not receive wages. Based on Article 27 of the Law, this complaint was sent to the hyakimlik of the Dashoguz welayat. The response received from the welayat hyakimlik reported that this fact was established, a meeting was held with the applicants, and a full settlement was planned in the near future. Later, a letter was sent to the Office of the Ombudsperson from the applicants who informed that the matter was settled and they received a full payment.

Residents of the same welayat N.T. et al (a total of 6 people) addressed their similar labour issues: that the Dashoguz municipal Repair and Construction Trust did not pay them salaries for completed construction and installation works. On the basis of Article 27 of the Law, the appeal was sent to the hyakimlik of the Dashoguz welayat and the response received from the welayat hyakimlik stated that during the verification this fact was confirmed and that the applicants had been paid off in full, and a response was sent to the applicants.

Residents of the Balkan welayat appealed on the similar issue; this appeal was also collective. Thus, the drivers of the Housing and Maintenance Trust of the city of Balkanabat G.B. et al, 13 people in total, expressed dissatisfaction with their payroll. The appeal on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was sent to the hyakimlik of the Balkan welayat. In the response received from the welayat hyakimlik, it was stated that the Investigation Unit of the Police Department of Balkanabat carried out a check and established that, despite the fact that applicants immediately notified the employer about the shutdown that was not their fault, however, when they were paid their wages, violations were made. Based on subsection 124 (1) of the Labour Code, the applicants were paid statutory wages, about which they were notified in writing.

The above, in particular collective appeals and the establishment of the facts indicated in them, serve as an example of violation of the legal rights of not only one person, but a group of citizens.

One more statement on the labour issue came from a resident of the Balkan welayat, O.D., who in her appeal indicated that being the chief specialist of the Department for monitoring the quality of products and technology of the Agricultural complex of the Balkan welayat, she was dismissed while she was on maternity leave. This statement, based on Article 27 of the Law, was sent for verification to the General Prosecutor's Office of Turkmenistan. As stated in the response, during the audit it was found that upon the dismissal of a citizen O.D. part 3 of Article 241 of the Labour Code was infringed and at the last meeting with the members of the commission of the Balkangallaonumleri/Balkan grain products Production Association and the citizen herself, she was invited to take the post of Head of Laboratory of this Production Association. With her consent, she was hired.

As indicated above, when analyzing complaints, it was found that the most of them related to housing issues. A superficial examination of the local applications on this issue led to the appeal of citizens to various organizations, including the Office of the Ombudsperson. However, during the inspections it turned out that their issues can be fully resolved on the ground. For example, the appeal of a resident of the Balkan welayat O.G. that instead of demolished housing, she was provided with a two-room apartment of a smaller area for a family of 14 people, which deteriorated her living conditions. The appeal on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was sent to the hyakimlik of the Balkan welayat. According to the results of the audit, the welayat hyakimlik replied that the applicant's requirements were satisfied, in particular, she was provided with housing no smaller than the demolished housing and taking into account her family members.

There have been cases when managers of organizations and officials contributed to violation of the legitimate rights and interests of citizens by not fulfilling their duties or abusing their official powers.

For example, a resident of Ashgabat M.K. complained that a woman named G., with the support of officials, took advantage of his group 2 disability and deprived him of his apartment, which was left to him by his mother, and did not return his passport and relevant documents for housing. The appeal on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was sent to the General Prosecutor's Office of Turkmenistan to assist in conducting the verification of facts. During the check, it was found that a certain T.B., who worked as deputy manager of the Housing and Maintenance Trust of the Bagtyyarlyk etrap of Ashgabat, taking advantage of M.K.'s temporary stay in the psycho-neurological dispensary of the Dashoguz welayat, where he was undergoing compulsory treatment, illegally handed over his apartment that is located in 30th microdistrict of Ashgabat, to J.B., working under his supervision as a plasterer, which led to a serious violation of the legitimate rights and interests of M.K. The Prosecutor's Office of the Bagtyyarlyk etrap of Ashgabat had begun

criminal proceedings in relation to T.B. in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 181 of the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan, with charges against him under this article. The case is undergoing a preliminary investigation. In addition, a separate instruction was issued to the Criminal Investigation Department of the Bagtyyarklyk etrap Police Department to search for a personal passport and documents for the apartment, the applicant was notified in writing about this and the above.

Appeal of E.Kh. a resident of Ashgabat about illegal, without her permission, taking her underage child abroad by her ex-husband, was sent to the Prosecutor General of Turkmenistan on the basis of Article 27 of the Law. According to the results of the audit, it was reported that during the verification of this statement in accordance with Articles 214-215 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Turkmenistan, the Military Prosecutor's Office of Ashgabat established that the former husband E.Kh., T.Kh. during his stay in the Russian Federation, certified a fictitiously issued power of attorney from E.Kh. in a notary's office in Moscow regarding their underage son. Knowing the fictitious nature of the power of attorney, T.Kh. used falsified documents and passed through the migration checkpoint of the Ashgabat International Airport. He illegally took his son out of Turkmenistan on international air flight Ashgabat-Moscow. It was reported that the Military Prosecutor's Office of Ashgabat based on part 3 of Article 218 of the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan launched criminal prosecution in relation to T.Kh. A criminal case has been instituted in which the Prosecutor's Office of the Bagtyyarklyk etrap of Ashgabat is conducting a preliminary investigation. The citizen E.Kh. who addressed with this issue was notified of this in writing.

In addition, cases have been identified where, by their irresponsible attitude to official duties of some bank employees, they led to violations of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

An example of this is the appeal of the residents of the Balkan welayat E.M. and W.D. that they cannot transfer money to their children studying abroad. This appeal to the Office of the Ombudsperson on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was sent to the General Prosecutor's Office of Turkmenistan. The response letter indicated that the Prosecutor's Office in the city of Turkmenbashi revealed facts of violation of the law and in order to eliminate them, according to the submission made to the State Joint-Stock bank "Turkmenbashi", the leading specialist of the Currency operations Department of the Bank branch in the city of Turkmenbashi received a severe reprimand as a disciplinary sanction. The national currency was converted into foreign currency for the applicants and transferred to their children studying abroad through the Western Union payment system. The applicants were notified in writing of the above. Later, these citizens sent a letter of thanks to the Office of the Ombudsperson. (14 May 2019).

In some cases, citizens in their appeals do not disclose a specific state of affairs, thereby creating the impression that the organizations to which they addressed left

their questions unresolved and violated their rights or their family members. However, in the course of verification it was established that sometimes they are offenders themselves.

For example, a resident of the Ahal welayat B.A. in his statement indicated that the relevant law enforcement officials did not bring the guilty persons who intentionally caused grave bodily harm to his son by beating him to justice. This citizen's appeal was sent in accordance with Article 27 of the Law to the Prosecutor General's Office of Turkmenistan and, because of the audit, it was found that M.A., the son of B.A. illegally grazed his small cattle in a protected forestry area. Foresters of that area A.G. and H.G. gave him an oral warning. Despite this, he began to argue with them and hit the arm of H.G. with a shepherd's stick thereby causing him an average bodily harm and minor bodily harm to A.G., which did not entail any harm to health. The material damage was caused to forestry in the amount of 10,052.40 manats. On this fact, the relevant police department initiated criminal proceedings in relation to M.A. - the applicant's son under part 2 of Article 108 of the Criminal Code of Turkmenistan, investigative proceedings are ongoing, and the applicant was notified in writing about this.

There is another example: a resident of the Dashoguz welayat Sh.A. complained that her acquaintance A.B. regularly speaks obscene words to her, insults her in the Central farmers market of the city of Dashoguz, but despite her repeated appeals to the relevant law enforcement agencies, no measures were taken. This appeal on the basis of Article 27 of the Law was sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan. The audit found that due to a long-standing hostile relationship between the parties, the Police department of Dashoguz conducted an audit with relation to the incident on the Central market of the city, as a result of which both citizens were held administratively liable. Furthermore, as to a fight during the quarrel between the applicant Sh.A. and a citizen G.O., which also occurred on the territory of the bazaar, employees of the Police department of Dashoguz also conducted an audit, due to which, under paragraph 2 part 1 of Article 31 of the Criminal Procedure Code, criminal proceedings were refused. Thus, violations in the actions of law enforcement officers have not been established, but due to the fact that disagreements and conflicts between Sh.A. and A.B. systematically continued, the parties were called to the Police department of the Dashoguz welayat, where a preventive conversation was held with them, official warning protocols were drawn up. Based on the results of the audit, a written response was sent to the applicant.

In the analyzed period, the Ombudsperson, based on Article 30 of the Law, filed a recommendation with the hyakimlik of the city of Ashgabat at the request of citizen B.G., who applied with housing issue. In particular, a resident of Ashgabat B.G. in her appeal pointed out, that in 2000 the Central Council of the

Magtymguly Youth organization of Turkmenistan allocated a company dormitory for her, in which she lived with her two minor children. The Central Council appealed to the hyakimlik of Ashgabat with a request for permission to register at the specified address (*propiska*), however, the Department for Record, Distribution and Registration of housing of the hyakimlik of Ashgabat refused to accept documents.

In the corresponding letter from the hyakimlik of Ashgabat, it was reported that in case of questions related to the registration of citizens (*propiska*), should there is a written request from the relevant organization, signed by the head of the organization or his deputy, the issuance of warrants for company and residential premises, the renewal of ownership from one person to another in residential buildings managed by ministries and industry departments are considered by the Public Commission for housing issues of the hyakimlik of Ashgabat. In this connection, the Central Council of the Magtymguly Youth organization of Turkmenistan sent a letter to the hyakimlik of the city of Ashgabat requesting registration of a residence permit for B.G. who had worked for them for 10 years and since 2000 lived in a dormitory belonging to their organization. However, the Department for Record, Distribution and Registration of housing of the hyakimlik of Ashgabat refused to accept their documents in the prescribed manner. Based on the foregoing, the Ombudsperson's Office sent a recommendation to the khyakimlik of the city of Ashgabat on the basis of Article 30 of the Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson" with a proposal to consider the housing issue of citizen B.G. in accordance with the requirements of the law. In its response, the hyakimlik of Ashgabat reported that the statement of B.G. would be considered by the Public Commission on Housing issues of the hyakimlik of Ashgabat after a complete package of documents, including applications from the organization, signed by its head to the Department for Record, Distribution and Registration of housing of the hyakimlik of Ashgabat had been submitted.

The Law of Turkmenistan "On the Ombudsperson" provides for the rights of the Ombudsperson to facilitate the development of international co-operation in the field of human rights. Within the framework of this rule, the relations of the Ombudsperson with international organizations and intergovernmental bodies for the protection of human rights, human rights bodies of foreign states have been established, work has begun with them in promoting protection of human rights and freedoms.

In particular, the Office of the Ombudsperson, through authorized representatives of human rights of some states, received appeals on various issues from citizens who previously lived in Turkmenistan and currently reside in their countries. The Ombudsperson examined them, requesting the required documents from the relevant authorities, and in some cases when verification of these applications was required, considered the results of the audit carried out on her request to the relevant authorities.

During the analyzed period, the Ombudsperson received 7 letters from other countries, and adequately replied to 6 of them. The issues addressed in such appeals of citizens mainly concerned their social rights, in particular, pension issues, migration issues, or such as assisting in obtaining the necessary documents from organizations with which they were in labour relations (from the place of previous work), or from the civil registration authorities.

Such co-operation was considered as positive and led to favourable results. This was confirmed by letters of appreciation received by the Ombudsperson from the ombudspersons of other states who sent these appeals.

The above examples, based on the results of the consideration by the Office of the Ombudsperson of incoming appeals, demonstrate that citizens' appeals to protect their rights were positively resolved and attention was drawn to the factors of negligence. The purpose of this was to help prevent human rights violations.

Chapter IX. Findings and proposals

As can be seen, the report on the work carried out by the Ombudsperson in 2019, which was held under the motto “Turkmenistan is the Motherland of Prosperity,” and on the human rights situation in the country, is presented in nine separate chapters. Without repeating the detailed information highlighted in these chapters, it should be noted that last year was full of memorable events in all areas, large-scale work implemented, and it was the year of the new beginnings.

The economic, political and social development of the motherland, increasing its authority at the international level, serves as a reliable safeguard for ensuring and protecting the rights and freedoms of man and citizen in our country. The consistent improvement of national legislation, the implementation of long-term socio-economic programmes in various areas, including the National Human Rights Action Plans, testify to the practical implementation of these safeguards. In view of the foregoing, in particular on the human rights situation in the country, as well as on the work carried out by the Ombudsperson in 2019 and the conclusions made, we consider it appropriate to propose the following recommendations.

As follows from the relevant chapters of the report, although the majority of citizens' appeals were examined locally in accordance with the law, appeals received by the Office of the Ombudsperson indicated that they had to apply to higher organizations due to the fact that they did not receive specific answers within the timeframe established by law. This was confirmed by the examples given in the report, when the requests sent from the Office of the Ombudsperson received answers with violation of the terms for their consideration or statements that did not correspond to the issue, or answers that showed that the content of the

appeal had not been thoroughly studied. Such a situation led to the expression of dissatisfaction among citizens, violation of their rights, as well as to repeated appeals. With the aim of eliminating these shortcomings, achieving effective consideration of citizens' appeals in the manner and terms provided by law, we suggest that:

–the heads of ministries, branch departments, hyakims organize an effective consideration of citizens' appeals in the manner and within the time stipulated by law, as well as their thorough examination on the merits, and keep this issue under constant monitoring.

Great work is being done in the country to ensure favourable housing conditions for citizens. Specific examples of this extensive activity were given in previous chapters of the report. Despite this, this issue remained key in the main part of the appeals received by the Office of the Ombudsperson. As can be seen from the analysis of citizens' appeals received in the reporting year, 89 or 26.3% - written appeals, 127 or 32.2% - oral ones related to housing issues. In the appeals, citizens mainly touched upon the issues of improving housing conditions, home registration, and registration in it. Of course, not all of these appeals were justified or a violation of citizens' rights truly took place. However, it can be concluded that such a number of appeals on this issue could not have occurred if these appeals were accepted, considered by local executive authorities, housing commissions under hyakimliks and feedback would be provided in accordance with the requirements of the law. This would ensure that citizens received timely response on their appeals based on laws. Having said that and with the aim of assisting citizens in ensuring the exercise of their housing rights, we suggest that:

- the housing commissions, within their competence consider, in the manner and terms provided for by law, the citizens' appeals and inform citizens accordingly about the results;*
- housing commissions strictly observe the order of citizens in housing queue.*

One of the main directions of the country's social strategy is maintaining the level of employment of the population. The programmes implemented to this end, created jobs, served as a positive example of addressing issues in this area. Thus, last year, special importance was attached to strengthening human resources in the context of consistent industrialization of the country, the transition to the digital economy and the formation of the information society, the development of a market economy and businesses. This was confirmed by an indicator showing that in the last reporting year the number of people registered in search of work in the country was 75,315 people; during the same year, 68,988 people were employed.

However, despite this, a certain part of the appeals received in the reporting year by the Office of the Ombudsperson related to labour issues. As can be seen from the analysis, on this issue there were 39 or 11.5% of written, 52 or 13.2% of oral appeals. Most of these appeals related to the issue of employment. Also, as can be

seen from the information presented in the report, a significant part of citizens from the regions of the country touched upon the issue of employment, or 45 or 26.7%. As we see, despite the fact that a lot of work is being done in this area, it is necessary to increase the efficiency of the respective systems. Based on the above, we suggest that:

- *the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the population control the activities of subordinate departments and departments of labour and social protection of the population, verify the validity of the information submitted by it, institutions and organizations about their vacant places/positions, the results of job assignments issued to citizens from the lists of citizens seeking work;*
- *they keep under systematic control the provision of the requirements of the Regulation governing the quotas for up to 5% of the total number of workers at workplaces for persons with disabilities who have a recommendation for work in accordance with an individual rehabilitation programme, and for single parents and parents raising many minor children or children with disabilities, approved by order of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the population of Turkmenistan in January 2016 as part of the implementation of the “Programme for the improvement of employment and job creation opportunities in Turkmenistan for 2015-2020”.*
- *in order to prevent the commission of persons released from places of deprivation of liberty of repeated crimes, as well as to prevent the return of persons suffering from alcoholism, drug addiction to special rehabilitation centres, their full rehabilitation, adaptation to life, respect for their right to work, to keep under strict control implementation of measures for their employment.*

As it is known, the structural restructuring of the economy continues in the light of the transition to market relations. In this case, among the main goals a radical increase in the role of private property, reducing the role of the state in the economy by creating all opportunities for the development of private property and individual entrepreneurship were put forward. The high results achieved last year in the non-state sector of the economy confirm the success of the work carried out in this area. In particular, the share of private businesses accounted for 65.3 percent in the structure of production. With the development of the private sector, the provision of jobs for citizens is improving. At the same time, along with the foregoing, in enterprises related to the private sector, there were cases of offenses, disputes, dissatisfaction in the field of legal labour relations, as well as between citizens on issues of property relations. In the reporting year, there were also appeals to the Ombudsperson on these issues. However, in accordance with the provisions of the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, in particular due to the fact that the Ombudsperson considers complaints of citizens of Turkmenistan and foreign citizens and stateless persons located in Turkmenistan on decisions or actions (inaction) of state authorities, local self-government,

officials, public servants only, such appeals (related to private sector issues) were not accepted for proceedings and were not considered.

Based on the foregoing and further expansion of the country's transition to private ownership, we suggest to:

- *study the international experience of independent institutions that protect the rights of individuals and legal entities engaged in private entrepreneurial activity and the rights of citizens who are in legal relations with them, the feasibility and possibility of creating such structures in our country.*

As noted in the relevant chapters of the report, dozens of long-term programmes aimed at improving the living conditions of our citizens are being implemented in our country. Within the framework of these programmes, the construction, laying foundations of houses, new villages, cities is being carried out, comfortable vehicles are being purchased, the scope of services for citizens is being developed in all directions, work is underway at a rapid pace to switch to a digital system - one of the most important areas of our time. Based on the above, we suggest to:

- *provide and strictly observe the accessibility of buildings, houses, transportation, information and communication means and the social system and public services for all sections of population, including people with disabilities and limited mobility.*
- *continue to fulfill international obligations in the field of the rights of people with disabilities, in order to ensure their rights, to consider increasing the responsibility for non-compliance with accessibility requirements;*

As can be seen from the indicators and specific examples cited in the report, the number of written, oral and collective appeals had begun to grow, which expressed dissatisfaction with the activities of the banking system. They were mainly about the fact that citizens faced obstacles when transferring money to children studying abroad, receiving Visa payment system cards. In order to achieve compliance with the rights of citizens provided for by the legislation of Turkmenistan to use the services of the banking system, we suggest to:

- *strengthen control over compliance with the norms provided for in the legislation on ensuring the rights of citizens to the uninterrupted use of the banking system.*

The analysis of the appeals received in the reporting year, like in previous years, made it possible to establish the main causes of appeals. More precisely, it was concluded that the reason for the emergence of a certain part of the appeals was the insufficient level of awareness of citizens about their rights and obligations, as well as of local officials responsible for considering appeals, in compliance with legislative norms.

Also, as it is known, the country has the task to switch to a digital system in a short time. The transition to a digital system will create an opportunity for citizens to use the services of a digital system, or, more precisely, to be in online communication with organizations, to receive any information online. In order to raise awareness and increase the knowledge of citizens and officials about human rights, and because of important transformations carried out in the country, we suggest to:

- *consider the possibility of adopting a unified state programme providing for specific measures to conduct continuous integrated work by ministries, sectoral departments, hakimliks of welayats, districts, cities, law enforcement agencies, the media, public organizations to increase knowledge and awareness of the population and relevant responsible officials in the field of human rights.*

Concluding the report of the Ombudsperson on the work done and situation in the field of human rights in the country for 2019, we express our confidence that the state authorities and local self-governments will use the facts and proposals highlighted in the report in their daily work and take them into account when drawing up long-term work plans, implementing effective activities in this area.

The Ombudsperson, in turn, assures that, within the limits of her competence, provided for by the Law of Turkmenistan “On the Ombudsperson”, she and the staff of the Office will continue to strictly perform the tasks aimed at observing, protecting, ensuring rights of man and citizen.