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**Human rights questions: human rights situations and
reports of special rapporteurs and representatives****Letter dated 18 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative
of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

In reference to my previous letter dated 17 March 2004 (A/58/743), I have the honour to forward herewith the text of the Law of Turkmenistan on abolition of criminal responsibility for the violation of laws on religious organizations (see annex I), adopted on 14 May 2004, and the text of the decree of the President of Turkmenistan signed on 14 May 2004 on repealing the previous decree on control and use of the charitable aid in religious groups and religious organizations in Turkmenistan (see annex II).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 117 (c).

(Signed) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan
to the United Nations

Annex I to the letter dated 18 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Act of Turkmenistan on the abolition of criminal responsibility for violation of the laws on religious organizations

For the purposes of the effective exercise of the rights of citizens to freedom of religion, guaranteed under the Constitution of Turkmenistan, and also to ensure compliance with the standards and principles of international law on issues of freedom of conscience:

1. Criminal responsibility for violation of the laws on religious organizations shall be abolished.

2. An amendment shall be made to the Penal Code of Turkmenistan, passed into law on 12 June 1997 (Bulletin of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan, 1997, No. 2, art. 9; 1998, No. 1, art. 11; 2000, No. 1, art. 3; Nos. 3-4, art. 41; 2002, No. 4, art. 72; 2003, No. 2, art. 9) to delete article 223-2 "Violation of the laws on religious organizations".

Saparmurat Niyazov
President of Turkmenistan

Annex II to the letter dated 18 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Decree of the President of Turkmenistan repealing Decree No. 6645 of the President of Turkmenistan of 23 March 2004

In order to establish the necessary legal guarantees to protect freedom of religion and conscience and also to improve the legislation of Turkmenistan on religious organizations, I decree:

Decree No. 6645 of the President of Turkmenistan of 23 March 2004 “On the control and use of charitable aid in religious groups and religious organizations in Turkmenistan” is hereby repealed.

Saparmurat Niyazov
President of Turkmenistan
