

BOYCOTT "MADE IN TURKEY"

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Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Assyrians, and Iraqi Kurds are doing it.

Armenia has begun doing it.

Glendale Armenians are doing it.

They are boycotting Turkish products. While the motivation of the Armenians, Assyrians and Kurds require no explanation, the Arab boycott is in reaction to the recent belligerence of Ankara and stated designs for regional hegemony. Saudi Arabia has two additional reasons: Erdogan is maneuvering to become the spiritual leader of the Muslim world and Turkey's coverage of the killing of a Saudi journalist in Istanbul, to embarrass the Saudi leadership. The hyped coverage by the government-controlled Turkish media was intended to embarrass the Saudi royals.

The above boycotters join Armenians around the globe that have practiced individual boycotts of Turkish products, especially packaged goods such as grocery items. They use social media to inform fellow boycotters what products to avoid because of their Turkish origins. In several instances, small groups of Armenians have demonstrated in front of stores selling Turkish products. Now, there's an ARF-sponsored group in Glendale ("turkishproduct#freezone) which advocates collective Armenian boycott of Turkish products and services. "The idea is make our community Turkish product-free zone," said a member of the group and added, "The movement is to give our community the opportunity to take part in our national struggle for justice by boycotting Turkish products."

A more sophisticated undertaking is that of the United Kingdom Kurdish People's Assembly which is supported by non-Kurds interested in human rights. Their boycott site provides detailed figures on Turkish exports in a wide range of categories. In addition to product boycotting, the site also exposes corporate Turkey's links to the military, espionage, and the underworld. The Armenian group in Glendale should study the Kurdish operation ("turkishproduct#freezone") and the content of the professional website.

Effective boycotts can damage a country's economy and certainly ruin its image. The boycott of South Africa's apartheid regime is a shining example of this. A widespread boycott of Turkish products could force Ankara to be less generous to U.S. think tanks to spout pro-Turkish propaganda. It could reduce the number of lobbyists Ankara hires to market its policies, fund Turkish chairs at foreign universities, and obstruct U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Until the recent Erdogan-engineered debacle of Turkey's economy, the country had been making strides in manufacturing quality consumer products thanks to European technical input and financial incentives by Ankara. Ironically, the economic downturn has been a blessing to Turkish exporters because it has shrank the value of the lira.

Since many of Turkey's exports are not consumer goods, it's pointless to discuss them. The sector boycotts that can have the biggest negative impact on the Turkish economy are consumer goods—especially grocery products—and tourism. Turkish economy is increasingly reliant on tourism revenues which increased almost by 22 percent between 2017 and 2018. There's a direct relationship between the tourist industry and Erdogan regime's military adventures. In 2018 when tourism revenues increased to \$29.5 billion Turkey increased its military budget by 24 per cent to \$19 billion.

Turkish Food Production Statistics

- Nearly a quarter of Turkey's population is employed in agriculture and half of its area is devoted to agriculture.
- Turkey's major agricultural products are wheat, sugar beets, milk, poultry, cotton, tomatoes with hazelnuts and apricot as top products in value.
- Most of the apricot is grown on Armenian lands: Malatya, Erzincan, Igdir, Aras, Elazig, Sivas, Marash, and Nigde plus Antakya (Hatay) in Turkish-occupied northern Syria which France gave to Turkey in the late '30s to guarantee Turkey's neutrality.
- In 2018 Turkey produced three-quarters of the world's hazelnuts amounting to 287,000 tons (\$1.78 billion).
- In 2018 Turkey produced 190,000 tons of walnuts.
- Turkey's major trading partners are Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy.
- Food and drink production represent 20 percent (\$141 billion) of Turkey's GDP.

The conclusion is obvious: do not visit Turkey and don't fly Turkish Airlines (THY) which is 50 percent owned by Ankara. Erdogan and his family own THY shares. The technology arm of THY repairs air force aircraft and overhauls them. Pegasus and Sun Express are the two other major Turkish airlines. Pegasus has been involved in the illegal arms trade. Also do not patronize tour companies such as Divan Turizm and Nurol.

Another company you should boycott is Grundig. The venerable German company was purchased by Turkey's Koc holdings company in 2007. It makes TV, radio, and white goods. Nike should also be boycotted: it sponsors a number of Turkish football companies. Likewise, boycott BP and EXXON/ESSO for their huge investments in the Azeri oilfields.

The sector where boycotters can make the biggest difference is consumer goods, particularly groceries. Here is a list (incomplete) of Turkish products which every Armenian should boycott: Akhtar, Alkoy, Altinbas, Altunsa, ANI, Ayrar, Aytac, Baharat, Bagci, Bagdas, Bahtiyar, Basak pudding, Berrak, Beypazari mineral water, BIM, Bizim Muftak, Carkur, Cayku, Cicek, C-Yayla, Chobani, Dalan, Dikbal, Dogan, Egeturk, ersu, Fiskobirlik Gazioglu, Gedik, Gesas, Goral, Gulluoglu, Kaiser, Karaca,

Kemal,, Kukrer, Kuruiar, Marmara, Marmara Birlik, MIS, Oncu, Pakmaya, Pasabahce, Pinar, Reis, Sarikiz, Sek, Selena, Sera, Simsek, Sirma, Tahsin, Tamek, Topkek, Torku, Tukas, Uludag, Ucler, Urkel, Yayla, and Zeyno.

It's often difficult to see the "Made in Turkey" on these products because of the small type (to hide its origin?) on the label. One way—not full proof—is the logo. Often Turkish grocery products have a red oval and the company name in white in a "subtle" imitation of the Turkish flag.

Also boycott Godiva chocolates. Originally Belgian, some years ago it was bought by a Turkish holding company. Novella and Ferrero Rocher, contain a great deal of Turkish hazelnuts.

Despite Turkey's economic blockade of Armenia, the latter has continued to import Turkish products. Between 2009 and 2019 Armenia imported \$2.3 billion worth of Turkish goods and exported \$15.2 million. Some of the Turkish imports were accounted for by Armenian "entrepreneurs" who filled several pieces of luggage with Turkish purchase and took them to Armenia via Georgia.

In October, Armenia's Minister of Economy Tigran Khachatryan announced Turkish goods will be boycotted as of Dec. 31 for six months.

Boycotting Turkish goods is not an onerous task: You simply refuse to buy Turkish products. To be more effective, you can encourage relatives, friends, and internet colleagues to join the boycott. You may join a boycott group and if there isn't one help form one. Make it a priority to protest in front of stores selling Turkish products.

Discard negative thoughts that your boycott would make little difference. A penny here and a penny there make a dollar. After all, what is a sea but many drops of water?

For further information go to Boycott-Turkey.org or Boycott-Turkey.net

There are no comments yet.