AVİM Commentary • No: 2015 / 17 •

STARBUCKS SUCCUMBS TO IGNORANT ANTI-TURKISH PROPAGANDA

Mehmet Oğuzhan TULUN

Analyst

On 18 February 2015, Armenian publication *Asbarez.com* shared a piece of news titled Starbucks to Remove Offensive Posters from Stores.[i] The news piece stated that a branch of the coffee retailer Starbucks in the state of California of the United States had put up posters (pictured on the left) that upset many of its customers. The customers alleged that the posters pictured women wearing Armenian traditional costumes under the Turkish Crescent and Star and that they were shocked upon seeing these posters. Armenians utilized social media to express that they felt insulted by Starbucks actions and called for the coffee retailers boycott. Starbucks did not elaborate on why the posters were put up, but apologized for upsetting its customers and stated that it would start removing these posters from its branches.

The costumes depicted in the posters are traditional costumes of Anatolian women. Each region in Turkey has its own set of traditional costumes for both women and men. An image search in any internet search engine will reveal that there are many traditional Turkish womens costumes that resemble the costumes depicted in the posters. At the same time, Armenian women too have such traditional costumes. This is only natural, Turks and Armenians have lived side by side for centuries under the Ottoman Empire - meaning in Anatolian land, and came to share many cultural aspects such as clothing, cuisine, and mannerisms. It is ignorant to allege that the costumes depicted in the posters are of Armenian origin without even being aware of the shared cultural heritage of Turks and Armenians.

The customers were shocked to see women wearing such costumes under the Turkish Crescent and Star. In essence, this means that the mere sight of the Turkish Crescent and Star is upsetting for people of Armenian descent. This is, essentially, a part of the Armenian disporas blanket dislike of anything related to Turkey and Turks and easily translates into anti-Turkish stance and propaganda.

Starbucks, which by the way has scores of loyal customers in Turkey, has succumbed to the anti-Turkish propaganda carried out by uninformed and racist members of the Armenian diaspora. If Starbucks is to apologize, it should be to the Turkish people (especially to people of Turkish descent living in the US) for succumbing to such ignorant propaganda.

[i] Starbucks to Remove Offensive Posters from Stores, *Asbarez.com*, http://asbarez.com/131873/starbucks-to-remove-offensive-posters-from-stores/

About the Author :

Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun is an AVİM Analyst. His research focuses on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Asia, Turkish-Armenian and Turkey-Armenia relations, international crimes and history, and the interplay between religion and politics.

To cite this article: TULUN, Mehmet Oğuzhan. 2026. "STARBUCKS SUCCUMBS TO IGNORANT ANTI-TURKISH PROPAGANDA." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2015 / 17. February 19. Accessed November 21, 2026. https://avim.org.tr/public/en/Yorum/STARBUCKS-SUCCUMBS-TO-IGNORANT-ANTI-TURKISH-PROPAGANDA

Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
Tel: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26
@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi
E-Mail: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

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