

Turkish Police Confiscate Over 1,200 Fake Life Jackets



Ankara, January 7 (RHC)-- Turkish police have confiscated over 1,200 fake life jackets destined to be sold to desperate asylum seekers trying to reach Europe through the Aegean Sea. Authorities uncovered the illegal workshop in the western coastal city of Izmir on Wednesday, and seized 1,263 life jackets filled with non-buoyant materials. Two of the four people working in the center were underage Syrian girls.

According to Turkey's English-language newspaper Today's Zaman, the fake life jackets are sold much cheaper than the real ones to lure the refugees to buy them. It added that the demand for life jackets are so high that some shoe and clothes shops, and even street vendors, sell life jackets, including fake ones, as their primary products.

The standard life jackets are made up of water repellent materials, enabling their wearers to float on water for some ten hours, even in an unconscious mode. But the fake ones, stuffed with packaging rather than buoyancy aids, often absorb water, become heavy, and drag the user down.

On Tuesday, the bodies of more than 30 refugees, including children, were discovered along Turkey's coast. Many of them had worn life jackets.

An unprecedented wave of refugees fleeing conflict-ridden zones in Africa and the Middle East, particularly Syria, has been entering European countries.

According to figures released by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than one million refugees reached Europe's shores in 2015, with more than 800,000 of them arriving in Greece. Nearly 3,700 people either died or went missing.

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