



ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CANADA
COMITÉ NATIONAL ARMÉNIEN DU CANADA

September 14, 2026

Canada-Turkey Trade Consultations

Trade Negotiations Division
Global Affairs Canada
111 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1N 1J1

Re: Consultation on a Potential Canada-Turkey Free Trade Agreement

Dear Minister and Officials at Global Affairs Canada,

The Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) welcomes the opportunity to provide input on the Government of Canada's consultations regarding a potential Canada-Türkiye Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

The ANCC recognizes the potential economic value of deeper commercial relations between Canada and Türkiye. However, any expansion of trade and investment must be structured in a manner that preserves Canada's ability to protect national security, uphold its international obligations, and prevent Canadian goods and technology from contributing to armed conflict, human rights violations, or the destabilization of neighbouring states.

Our principal concern is therefore the treatment of military goods, defence-related technology, and sensitive dual-use goods and technology in the context of a future FTA.

The issue is not theoretical. Canada has already experienced a significant failure of end-use assurances involving military technology exported to Türkiye.

1. A Canada-Türkiye FTA Must Not Weaken Canada's Export-Control Regime

Canada's experience with military technology exported to Türkiye demonstrates the importance of preserving Canada's ability to exercise its export-control authorities under any future trade agreement.

In 2020, the Government of Canada suspended export permits to Türkiye following allegations that Canadian technology was being used in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Global Affairs Canada subsequently reviewed Canadian military exports to Türkiye. The review found credible evidence that Canadian sensors installed on Turkish unmanned aerial vehicles had been used in

Nagorno-Karabakh and identified evidence concerning the use of Turkish UAVs likely equipped with Canadian sensors in Libya and Syria. In April 2021, Canada cancelled 29 export permits to Türkiye after determining that the use of Canadian technology was inconsistent with Canadian foreign policy and the end-use assurances provided by Türkiye.¹

This experience demonstrated that assessing the risk of a sensitive export cannot depend solely on the identity of the immediate purchaser or destination. Canadian-origin technology may be incorporated into a larger system, transferred to another entity, or subsequently re-exported.

The ANCC therefore recommends that the Government make the following safeguards explicit negotiating priorities.

First, the FTA should expressly preserve Canada’s authority under its export-control legislation.

No provision of the agreement should limit, delay, condition, or otherwise constrain Canada’s ability to issue, deny, suspend, amend, or cancel export or brokering permits for military goods, defence-related technology, surveillance and targeting systems, aerospace technology, or sensitive dual-use goods and technology.

Canada’s export-control framework, including the *Export and Import Permits Act* (EIPA), must continue to govern such exports notwithstanding any preferential treatment established under the FTA. Under sections 7.3 and 7.4 of the EIPA, Canada must assess relevant risks, including whether an export or brokering activity could contribute to or undermine peace and security or could be used to commit or facilitate specified serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law. These statutory authorities must remain fully available to the Government throughout the life of the agreement.²

Second, military and sensitive dual-use goods should not receive automatic preferential treatment under the FTA.

Tariff liberalization and other trade commitments should not be interpreted as creating an entitlement to export-controlled military or sensitive dual-use goods to Türkiye. These products should remain subject to Canada's export-control legislation, permit requirements, risk assessments, and foreign-policy considerations.

¹ Global Affairs Canada, *Final Report: Review of Export Permits to Türkiye* (Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada, April 2021); Global Affairs Canada, “Minister of Foreign Affairs Appearance before the Committee of the Whole: Briefing Material,” May 31, 2021.

² *Export and Import Permits Act*, R.S.C. 1985, c. E-19, ss. 7.3–7.4.

Third, Canada should preserve and strengthen end-use and end-user assurances.

Canada's experience with Türkiye demonstrates the importance of obtaining reliable information concerning both the ultimate end-user and the intended use of sensitive Canadian-origin technology. Applications involving Türkiye should continue to be assessed under Canada's existing risk-assessment framework, including the criteria arising from Canada's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty as implemented through the EIPA.

Canada should maintain requirements, where warranted, for:

- identification of the ultimate end-user and intended end-use;
- disclosure of whether Canadian-origin components may be incorporated into another weapons system;
- assurances concerning unauthorized transfer and re-export;
- appropriate documentation and traceability;
- post-shipment verification or other compliance measures where warranted; and
- the ability to take prompt action when credible evidence indicates diversion, misuse, or a material change in circumstances.

Fourth, Canada must retain the ability to address diversion or re-export through Türkiye to third countries.

The WESCAM case demonstrates why the risk associated with a sensitive export cannot be assessed solely on the basis of its immediate destination. Global Affairs Canada's review considered evidence concerning the possible transfer of WESCAM-equipped Bayraktar TB2 UAVs to the Azerbaijani Armed Forces and determined that such a transfer could be interpreted as inconsistent with the end-use assurances provided by the Government of Türkiye.

The FTA should therefore preserve Canada's ability to consider foreseeable risks of transfer, incorporation, or re-export to third countries. In particular, no provision of the agreement should restrict Canada from preventing or responding to the transfer of Canadian-origin military or sensitive dual-use technology from Türkiye to Azerbaijan or another third country where such action is warranted under Canadian law or foreign policy.³

Fifth, the FTA should contain a strong and unambiguous national-security and export-control exception.

³ Global Affairs Canada, *Final Report: Review of Export Permits to Türkiye* (Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada, April 2021), section on Nagorno-Karabakh and end-use assurances.

Canada must retain the ability to adopt and enforce measures necessary to protect national security, international peace and security, human rights, and other legitimate public-policy interests, including measures relating to arms, military goods, sensitive technology, sanctions, export controls, and the prevention of diversion.

These protections should apply notwithstanding otherwise applicable market-access, national-treatment, investment, or other obligations under the agreement. Any dispute-settlement mechanism should likewise preserve Canada's ability to exercise its export-control authorities lawfully and independently in circumstances involving national security, international peace and security, human rights, or international humanitarian law.

Sixth, the FTA should not create a “standstill” on Canada’s future export-control measures.

Canada's export-control regime must remain capable of responding to emerging technologies, changing security conditions, new evidence, and evolving international obligations. An agreement negotiated in 2026 should not restrict Canada from strengthening, expanding, suspending, or otherwise modifying its export controls in the future because particular goods or technologies received preferential treatment when the agreement was concluded.

This is particularly important given Canada's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and the implementation of those obligations through the Export and Import Permits Act (EIPA). Canada deposited its instrument of accession to the ATT on June 19, 2019, and became a State Party on September 17, 2019. The ATT requires States Parties to assess the risk of negative consequences from conventional arms exports, including serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.⁴

Canada's domestic implementation of these obligations is reflected in sections 7.3 and 7.4 of the EIPA. Section 7.3 requires the Minister to consider whether covered exports or brokering activities would contribute to or undermine peace and security and whether the goods or technology could be used to commit or facilitate specified serious violations. Section 7.4 provides that, after considering available mitigating measures, the Minister must not issue a permit where there is a substantial risk that the export or brokering would result in one of those negative consequences.⁵

⁴ Global Affairs Canada, “Conventional Weapons: Arms Trade Treaty.” Canada deposited its instrument of accession to the Arms Trade Treaty on June 19, 2019, and became a State Party on September 17, 2019.

⁵ Global Affairs Canada, *Notice to Exporters No. 1108: Export and Brokering of Items Listed on the Export Control List and the Brokering Control List to Türkiye*, January 29, 2024.

The Canada–Türkiye FTA should therefore reinforce, rather than constrain, this framework. The Government must retain the ability to reassess export risks and take appropriate action when circumstances change or credible evidence of misuse, diversion, or unauthorized re-export emerges. Economic integration should not restrict Canada’s ability to strengthen or apply its export controls where Canadian-origin goods or technology present risks to peace and security, human rights, international humanitarian law, or Canadian foreign-policy interests.

2. Human Rights, Good Governance, Rule of Law, and Responsible Business Conduct

The Government’s consultation notice expressly identifies human rights, good governance, the rule of law, transparency, anti-corruption, and responsible business conduct as relevant considerations in the negotiation of a potential Canada–Türkiye Free Trade Agreement. The ANCC encourages the Government to ensure that these considerations are reflected meaningfully in Canada’s negotiating objectives and, ultimately, in the text and implementation of any agreement.⁶

For the ANCC, these issues are particularly important because Canada’s commercial relationship with Türkiye cannot be considered entirely separately from the broader human-rights and security context in which that relationship operates. Canada should ensure that economic liberalization does not diminish its ability to address serious human-rights concerns, promote responsible business conduct, or respond to conduct that may undermine regional peace and stability.

Canada should therefore seek strong provisions addressing human rights, responsible business conduct, transparency, good governance, and the rule of law. The agreement should not prevent Canada from adopting or maintaining measures necessary to protect human rights, public order, national security, international peace and security, or other legitimate public-policy objectives.

Canada should also encourage responsible business conduct by Canadian enterprises operating or investing in Türkiye. This should include appropriate consideration of human-rights risks, supply-chain impacts, and the potential effects of commercial activities on affected communities and cultural heritage.

⁶ 1. Government of Canada, *Canada Gazette, Part I, Volume 160, Number 31: Government Notices*, “Consulting Canadians on future trade negotiations with Türkiye,” August 1, 2026, paras. 377–431, .

Meaningful Consultation and Social Consensus

The Government's consultation process provides an important opportunity to ensure that any future agreement reflects broad social consensus rather than being assessed solely through the lens of aggregate economic benefit.

Armenian Canadians have a legitimate and longstanding interest in Canada's relationship with Türkiye. For Canadians whose families, communities, and cultural heritage are directly connected to the region, the human-rights and security implications of Canada's relationship with Türkiye are not abstract foreign-policy questions.

The ANCC therefore encourages the Government to ensure that the perspectives of affected Canadian communities, including Armenian Canadians and civil-society organizations with relevant expertise, are meaningfully considered as negotiations proceed.

Consultation should not be limited to the commercial interests that may benefit from increased market access. It should also consider the perspectives of Canadians concerned with human rights, regional security, cultural heritage, responsible business conduct, and Canada's international obligations.

Meaningful social consensus is particularly important where an agreement could deepen Canada's economic relationship with a state whose regional conduct and policies have direct implications for communities represented in Canada. Economic engagement with Türkiye can proceed while Canada continues to uphold its human-rights commitments and maintains an independent foreign policy grounded in international law.

The ANCC therefore recommends that Canada:

- include meaningful provisions on human rights, responsible business conduct, transparency, good governance, and the rule of law in the FTA;
- preserve Canada's ability to adopt and maintain measures necessary to protect human rights, national security, international peace and security, and other legitimate public-policy objectives;
- encourage appropriate human-rights and responsible-business due diligence by Canadian enterprises operating or investing in Türkiye;
- ensure that implementation of the agreement remains subject to meaningful monitoring and public accountability; and
- continue meaningful engagement with affected Canadian communities and civil-society organizations throughout the negotiation and implementation of the agreement.

3. Canada's Recognition of the Armenian Genocide Must Remain Unaffected

Canada's recognition of the Armenian Genocide is an established position of the Government of Canada. Global Affairs Canada states that the Armenian Genocide was recognized by the Parliament of Canada following a resolution adopted by the Senate in June 2002 and a motion adopted by the House of Commons in April 2004.⁷

That position should remain entirely independent of Canada's commercial relationship with Türkiye.

The ANCC therefore encourages the Government to ensure that increased economic engagement does not create pressure to dilute, qualify, or otherwise undermine Canada's established position on the Armenian Genocide.

Economic engagement and historical accountability are not mutually exclusive. Canada can pursue constructive commercial relations with Türkiye while maintaining its commitment to genocide recognition, remembrance, prevention, and the broader principle that historical accountability should not be subordinated to commercial interests.

4. Canada's Trade Policy Should Not Be Separated from the Continuing Consequences of the South Caucasus Conflicts

Finally, Canada's approach to closer economic relations with Türkiye should remain informed by the continuing humanitarian and security consequences of conflict in the South Caucasus.

Canada should continue to support the rights, security, and dignity of Armenians displaced from Artsakh and advocate for accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Canada should also continue to raise concerns regarding Armenian detainees held by Azerbaijan, including their treatment and due process rights, and support the protection of Armenian religious, cultural, and historical sites in territories now under Azerbaijani control.

These concerns are relevant to this consultation because Türkiye is an important regional actor and because Canadian technology previously exported to Türkiye was subsequently associated with military operations in the South Caucasus.

⁷ Global Affairs Canada, "Canada-Armenia Relations."

Canada's pursuit of closer economic relations with Türkiye should therefore not diminish its willingness to address serious humanitarian, human-rights, and accountability concerns in the region.

Conclusion

The ANCC does not oppose increased economic engagement between Canada and Türkiye in principle. Our concern is that economic integration must not come at the expense of Canada's ability to protect its national security, uphold its export-control obligations, and respond to the misuse or diversion of Canadian technology.

Canada has already faced this precise challenge.

The cancellation of 29 Turkish export permits in 2021 was an exceptional and consequential decision. It followed a government review that found credible evidence that Canadian technology had been used in regional conflicts and that this use was inconsistent with Canadian foreign policy and the end-use assurances provided by Türkiye.⁸

The lesson for the current negotiations is clear: **commercial integration should not make it harder for Canada to act when similar circumstances arise in the future.**

The ANCC therefore urges the Government of Canada to make the preservation of export-control and national-security policy space a clear negotiating priority in the Canada–Türkiye FTA.

At minimum, the final agreement should:

1. expressly preserve Canada's authority to issue, deny, suspend, amend, and cancel export and brokering permits for military and sensitive dual-use goods and technology;
2. ensure that trade preferences do not apply in a manner that overrides Canada's export-control legislation;
3. maintain robust end-use, end-user, re-export, and diversion controls;
4. preserve Canada's ability to prevent the transfer of Canadian-origin technology from Türkiye to third countries where such transfers would raise legal, security, or foreign-policy concerns;
5. include strong national-security and export-control exceptions that cannot be undermined through dispute settlement;

⁸ Global Affairs Canada, “Minister of Foreign Affairs Appearance before the Committee of the Whole: Briefing Material,” May 31, 2021; Global Affairs Canada, *Final Report: Review of Export Permits to Türkiye* (Ottawa: Global Affairs Canada, April 2021).

6. prevent the agreement from restricting Canada's ability to strengthen export controls in response to emerging risks; and
7. ensure that increased economic engagement remains consistent with Canada's commitments to human rights, international humanitarian law, and responsible business conduct.

A Canada–Türkiye FTA can support legitimate economic interests without weakening Canada's ability to act responsibly when Canadian goods or technology are placed at risk of misuse. The Government now has an opportunity to ensure that the lessons of the past inform the architecture of the future agreement.

The ANCC respectfully urges Global Affairs Canada to incorporate these safeguards into Canada's negotiating objectives and the eventual text of any Canada–Türkiye FTA.

Sincerely,
Shahen Mirakian - President



Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC)