

## The Triple Threat of Counterfeit Auto Parts and Türkiye's Role

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World Anti-Counterfeiting Day, observed on June 8<sup>th</sup>, aims to bring global attention to the widespread issue of counterfeiting which affects industries, the government, and consumers. Every year, the Traders of the Fake cost thousands of lives, jobs and billions of dollars which is much needed to propel economic growth. The car spare parts market has always been a profitable target for these IP criminals and Moroglu Arseven conducts very effective market clean-up project for many companies which are the major players of the automotive industry.

The global automotive aftermarket for replacement parts and accessories is large. According to a [research organization](#), this industry was worth more than USD 448 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow to USD 590 billion in 2030. The size of this market coupled with the trade convenience provided by online marketplaces make it a tempting target for counterfeiters, who seem to cut themselves a 45-billion-dollar slice of the cake every year.

The automotive industry is known for its significant investment in research and development. However, profit in this sector, according to [EUIPO](#), is "proportionally very small in relation to the investment," making the value lost in the fake auto trade even more crucial in propelling car innovations. On the other hand, the profit that counterfeiters make is, according to the same report, substantial, rapid, and low-risk and is used in other criminal activities.

Counterfeit auto spare parts pose a triple threat: they infringe upon the intellectual property rights (IPR) of rightsholders, endanger the safety of consumers, and have a detrimental impact on the environment. Here's a breakdown of the risks:

### Intellectual Property Rights Infringement:

- Trademark Infringement:** Counterfeit auto spare parts often carry fake trademarks or logos and deceptively convince consumers that they are purchasing genuine products. This unauthorized use of trademarks violates the exclusive rights of the legitimate trademark owners.
- Brand Dilution:** Brand dilution happens when a brand fails to live up to customers' expectations and, as a result, they negatively perceive the company's value, quality, and authenticity. The mass production of fake auto spare parts can undermine the distinctiveness and reputation of legitimate trademarks. When illicit products bearing a brand's trademark flood the market, consumers may become confused about the source and quality of the goods.
- Patent Infringement:** Many auto spare parts incorporate patented technologies or designs. Counterfeiters often replicate these without authorization, violating the patent rights of the original creators.

### Public Safety Hazards:

1. **Poor Quality Materials:** Counterfeit spare parts are typically made from inferior materials to cut costs and boost profit margins. This compromises the reliability and durability of the parts and increases the likelihood of failure.
2. **Lack of Quality Control:** Established manufacturers comply with stringent quality control standards to ensure their products meet safety. On the other hand, counterfeiters typically sidestep these standards, resulting in inconsistent quality and potential safety risks.
3. **Compatibility Issues:** Replica parts may not conform to the precise specifications of genuine parts, resulting in possible compatibility issues with the vehicle and potential malfunctions or damage.
4. **Increased Accident Risk: According to the [Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023](#), there are currently more than 1 billion motor vehicles in the world and the figure is expected to double by 2030. There are more than a million road traffic deaths every year and the World Health Organization [suggests](#) that thousands of these deadly accidents could be linked to counterfeit car parts in the vehicles involved in the incidents. With the number of vehicles set to increase, more lives will be at risk if necessary measures are not taken against illicit car parts.**

#### **Environmental Impact:**

1. **Increased Waste:** When compared to authentic parts, fake spare parts are known to have shorter lifespans and lower durability, increasing the likelihood of premature failure. This expedites the replacement cycles. The disposal of these parts contributes to environmental waste, adding to landfills and potentially releasing hazardous materials into the environment.
2. **Resource Depletion:** The production of counterfeit auto parts requires resources such as metals, plastics, and chemicals. If these parts are manufactured without authorization, it could result in greater resource depletion, as counterfeiters might not follow sustainable practices or regulations for resource usage.
3. **Pollution:** Counterfeit production methods might include the utilization of more affordable, less eco-friendly materials and techniques. This might cause a surge in pollution of the air, water, and soil due to emissions from factories, improper disposal of waste, and chemical runoff.
4. **Energy Consumption:** Illicit manufacturing operations are likely to be less energy-efficient than legitimate manufacturing processes. The reliance on outdated equipment, inefficient production methods, and failure to invest in energy-saving technologies can contribute to heightened energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
5. **Climate Change:** Counterfeit manufacturing activities are fuelling the rise in pollution, resource depletion, and energy consumption, all of which play a part in the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the exacerbation of climate change.

In recent years, Türkiye has turned into a major production hub for counterfeit car parts. Its strategic location bridging Asia and Europe makes it an ideal distribution centre for replica parts produced in Türkiye and destined for many neighbour countries. According to a joint EUIPO-Europol [report](#), Türkiye, after China, is the second country of provenance for fake products in the category of "vehicles, including accessories and parts" headed for the EU market. As in the global counterfeit market, oil filters, brakes, and brake pads have the biggest share of the fake spare parts in the Turkish market.

At [Moroglu Arseven](#), the successful execution of warrants against counterfeiters is of utmost significance. We implement rigorous surveillance measures to monitor the markets for counterfeit car parts by working with customs agencies and hiring professional investigators. In a few large-scale operations in 2023 and 2024, we have seized more than 300,000 pieces of counterfeit car parts and packages bearing logos and marks of several global auto brands in Türkiye.

## Related Practices

- [Anti-Counterfeiting](#)