

The Associated Press (AP) The Perjurer of Truth

By Zerai Solomon, London UK

When it comes to Africa, the role of the western media is to ensure that the continent is gripped in a never-ending cycle of violence by supporting minority groups intent on causing chaos and bloodshed, rather than report factual news. The modus operandi is simple, to drown out the truth and circulate a false narrative in keeping with the carefully cultivated and enhanced stereotype of Africans and their government. The western media suffers hugely from a strong current of racism that permeates through it, which is why a story about an African government is readily passed from one western media agency to another without due diligence of checking the veracity of the story afforded to stories about the West, as long as the story is outrageously horrific enough and testifies to the savagery of Africans. The story, regardless of how untrue and improbable it is, will sweep through the western media as long as it is in keeping with the image of Africans being brutal and capable of unspeakable atrocities. The western media is engaged in the process of peddling lies to foment discord and will tend to ignore voices of reason which do not support their evil narrative.

A case in point is the recent events in the northern parts of Ethiopia. In the early hours of 4th November 2020, forces of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, who until 2018 had been the minority government in Ethiopia, had launched a series of coordinated attacks on the bases of the Ethiopian Army Northern Command based in the region of Tigray. According to the spokesman of the Ethiopian Army, the attacks were carried out while the Ethiopian soldiers were asleep and unprepared for an attack from a force they had considered as one of their own until that point. The spokesman went on to reveal gruesome details of how Ethiopian soldiers were stripped naked and shot, with some who had been stripped naked and forced across the border into neighbouring Eritrea. Details had also emerged of several hundred people have being massacred by the TPLF at the town of Mai Kadra, simply because they were members of the Amhara ethnic group.

The attack on Ethiopian army bases by the TPLF was nothing more than a grossly miscalculated grab for power.

The Ethiopian Army had availed as much information as it could under the circumstances through press conferences held by high-ranking officials, including the Ethiopian Chief of Staff, General Berhanu Jula.

Judging by how the western media ignored the information provided by the Ethiopian army, the Ethiopian army spokespersons might not as well exist. Instead, the western media by and large chose to feature the lies provided to them by the TPLF and its associates, as it was in keeping with their prejudiced expectations of the unfolding events rather than give cover of the stories reported by the Ethiopian authorities.

Despite the TPLF itself admitting to starting the war that lasted all of two weeks, the western media have conveniently glossed over this uncomfortable fact, choosing instead to try and pin the blame for the current situation in the region of Tigray on the Ethiopian Prime minister and the Eritrean President.

The double standards in the western media were laid bare when they chose to ignore the 16 rocket attacks on Eritrean cities by the TPLF. The attacks targeted heavily populated areas in an apparent attempt to deliberately cause mass civilian casualties, which by itself is a war crime.

Ignoring the numerous intransigence of the TPLF, like the attack on the Ethiopian army bases, the massacre at Mai Kadra, the rocket attacks on Eritrean and Ethiopian cities and other crimes it had committed in the past few months alone, is something else, circulating stories about a massacre in churches and attempts to desecrate holy shrines in a bid to cause religious strife and clashes is at best an irresponsible act and an irresponsible malicious act at worst.

The AP published a story on 18th February 2021 entitled, ‘Horrible’: Witnesses recall massacre in Ethiopian holy city. The reporter claims to have interviewed ‘eye’ witness accounts of the killing of 800 hundred Christians in the church of Mary of Zion located in the city of Axum in Ethiopia.

The manner in which the article was written was a blatant attempt to deceive the gullible western reader. The reporter wrote about scenes in the city of Axum with the authority of that of an eye witness, despite not being anywhere near the city. In her deception she failed to make it clear that she was not in Axum and what she was describing was nothing more than hearsay at best and a figment of her imagination at worst.

The reporter claims to have spoken to eye witness (it is unclear how she did this, whether it was over the phone or some other way), one of which was supposedly a deacon at the church who had managed to escape while 800 of his congregation were massacred. The less informed and the gullible, might accept this story at face value, after all western society has over the years been primed to think that African armies are capable of committing the most insane and the most horrific acts.

Although I do not know whether the reporter who wrote the story is able to speak any of the Ethiopian languages spoken in the city of Axum, it is safe to assume that she doesn’t and has to rely on translators. Which makes the gathering of information that much more difficult.

The story was published on 18th February 2021, but it is known that the reporter did not have any eye witnesses she could interview and had not yet started to gather the material for her article on 14th February 2021. This information is gleaned from a face book account of the chief TPLF propagandist, in which he states on 14th February 2021, that the AP reporter was thinking about writing an article about the Axum ‘massacre’ and was looking for witness she could interview.



From this post it can be seen that the witness that the AP reporter is alleged to have been interviewed were provided by the TPLF itself, a fact that she had failed to mention in her article and one that casts serious doubt about her objectivity. No where in her article does she state that it was the TPLF that helped her with writing her article, for she knew that such an admission would discredit her. Bearing in mind the language barrier, the fact that the reporter is thousands of miles away from Axum, is unable to verify the identity of the witness, and carry out the very rudimentary of checks to verify the veracity of the accounts she was being fed, it is safe to assume that the reporter has either unwittingly or consciously availed herself to be used by the TPLF in propagating a story which is intended to arouse religious sensibilities to create chaos and unrest in the region and to stoke hatred against Eritreans.

Apart from trying to pour fuel on a smouldering fire, the intent of the article was a pathetic attempt to besmirch the good name of the Eritrean army by claiming that it was had carried out the massacre. The problem with this accusation is that, firstly as stated by both the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments, there are no Eritrean troops in Ethiopia. Secondly, even if one was to entertain the lie that Eritrean troops were in Ethiopia and they had carried out a massacre of such a scale in one of the holy places of the Orthodox church, how could the Ethiopian government remain silent while its citizens were being slaughtered. If the killings in the church were true, how could the Ethiopian Orthodox church remain silent? Even if the church was to ignore such an atrocity, how could the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians remain silent? Then there is the matter of the Eritrean Orthodox church and the millions of Orthodox Christians in Eritrea, which would have found abhorrent the idea that their own soldiers would commit such an act on one of the places they hold sacred.

The story published by AP is an indication of how low the western press will go to see that conflict, strife, unrest and death prevail in Africa. To the western media, African lives are expendable and they believe that Africans are not entitled to live in peace and harmony.

Eritreans have known for a long time that the western media is alien to the truth, but since November 2020, Ethiopians and the rest of the Horn of Africa, have been able to see the western media for what it is, a heinous monster with an insatiable appetite for innocent African blood.