

The “Bashasha-fication” of Truth: Abiy Ahmed’s Revisionist Scapegoating and the Red Sea Access Gambit

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Introduction

In the volatile geopolitical theater of the Horn of Africa, Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia has



emerged as a master of political theater and historical distortion. Having devolved from a self-styled architect of regional stability into a leader defined by domestic fragmentation and regional expansionism, Abiy’s latest maneuver involves a radical rewriting of the Tigray War (2020 – 2022). After inviting, facilitating, and effusively praising the intervention of the Eritrean military to secure his own political survival, Abiy has now launched a scorched-earth campaign of historical gaslighting. He has begun to issue a litany of blames against the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF), framing them as the sole perpetrators of the war’s devastation.

This revisionism is a cynical attempt to achieve two goals: to absolve the Ethiopian federal government of its legal and moral failures and to manufacture a nationalist pretext for the “Red Sea Access Gambit” (Gebremariam 2025b). By scapegoating Eritrea, Abiy seeks to hide behind a veil of manufactured grievance to cover his belligerent and illegal violations of Eritrean sovereignty. This article argues that the

attempt to shift blame onto Eritrea is not only a historical falsehood but a definitive sign of the moral decay of the current Ethiopian administration (Gebremariam 2025a).

A Consistent Moral Stance: Repudiating the Intervention

It is imperative to clarify the perspective from which this critique is offered. As the author of this analysis and the referenced works, I have maintained a consistent and vocal opposition to the Tigray conflict since its inception. I did not support Eritrean intervention in that war, and I was very vocal against the war in general and the Eritrean involvement in particular.

The military partnership between Abiy Ahmed and Issaias Afewerki was an inhumane



alliance that resulted in unspeakable suffering. What both leaders orchestrated was horrible and inhumane – a reality I abhor deeply. However, the current hypocrisy of Abiy Ahmed introduces a new level of depravity. *It is a betrayal of the truth that seeks to exploit*

the victims of the war twice: first by the violence itself, and now by the systematic distortion of who was responsible for it (Gebremariam 2025d).

The Sovereign's Invitation: Responsibility and Accountability

The foundational lie in Abiy's current narrative is the suggestion that the Eritrean military acted as an independent, rogue agent on Ethiopian soil. History and international law dictate otherwise. It was Abiy Ahmed who invited the Eritrean military to intervene in a domestic Ethiopian conflict. This invitation carries profound legal and moral consequences. As the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, it is the primary and non-negotiable responsibility of Abiy Ahmed to protect all Ethiopian citizens, including the people of Tigray.

By inviting a foreign military power into his sovereign territory to conduct operations against his own citizens, Abiy did not outsource his responsibility; he compounded his culpability. To now blame the Eritrean military for the crimes committed during that period is a transparent attempt to evade accountability. Abiy Ahmed bears the

ultimate responsibility for the safety of his people and the conduct of the forces he welcomed onto his soil. To suggest that the guest he invited is solely responsible for the damage done to his own house is not only an utter lie but a profound indication of the moral decay of his administration. Legal and moral accountability for the atrocities of the Tigray War rests squarely with Abiy Ahmed - the sovereign Commander-in-Chief who not only invited foreign forces onto Ethiopian soil but also personally sanctioned the military campaigns that targeted the very citizens he was constitutionally bound to protect (Gebremariam 2025c).

The Rhetoric of Appraisal and the “Bashasha-fication” of Mekelle

The evidence of Abiy’s direct role in the destruction is preserved in his own words. During the height of the conflict, Abiy and his senior federal officials were on record expressing “huge appreciation” for the role of the Eritrean military in saving the federal government. At the time, the EDF were lauded as indispensable partners.

Furthermore, Abiy’s own triumphant rhetoric revealed a deliberate policy of destruction. In a chilling address to the Ethiopian Parliament, he bragged about the military’s impact on Mekelle, the “North Star of Ethiopia.” He famously stated, *“we were able to make Mekelle like Bashasha”* – referring to the small, underdeveloped village of his birth. This was an explicit admission of a policy to reduce a vibrant city to a state of rural insignificance. The “Bashasha-fication” of Mekelle was not a rogue Eritrean objective; it was a stated goal of the Ethiopian Prime Minister. For Abiy to now point the finger at Eritrea for the destruction of Tigrayan infrastructure is a manifestation of profound **cognitive dissonance**. He is attempting to blame his former allies for executing the very devastation he previously celebrated as a victory (Gebremariam 2025c).

The Prosperity Façade and the Shift to Scapegoating

This pivot toward scapegoating is necessitated by the collapse of the “Prosperity Façade.” For years, the Abiy administration attempted to project an image of a modernizing, rising Ethiopia to mask internal decay, hyperinflation, and escalating ethnic conflicts in the Amhara and Oromia regions. As the reality of Ethiopia’s fragmentation becomes impossible to ignore, the government has turned to “Scapegoating Eritrea and Weaponizing Ignorance” as a survival tactic (Gebremariam 2025d).

By rewriting the history of the 2020 – 2022 war, Abiy hopes to achieve two objectives. First, he seeks to appease the international community by framing himself as a leader who was “misled” by a predatory neighbor. Second, he is attempting to redirect domestic anger away from his failed economic and security policies and toward a manufactured external enemy. This strategy relies on a short collective memory,

hoping that the world will forget the senior Ethiopian officials who praised the EDF and Abiy's own boasts about the destruction of Tigrayan cities.

The Red Sea Gambit: A Genealogy of Aggression

The most dangerous implication of this revisionist history is its role in the "Red Sea Access Gambit." Abiy Ahmed has recently begun to frame Ethiopia's lack of a sovereign port as an existential grievance, utilizing bellicose language that threatens the territorial integrity of Eritrea. This is not a pursuit of economic integration, but a "pre-emptive propaganda" campaign designed to justify future aggression (Gebremariam 2025a).

By painting Eritrea as a "hostile" actor that "betrayed" Ethiopia during the Tigray War, Abiy is building a moral case for the violation of Eritrean sovereignty. He is attempting to delegitimize the internationally recognized borders of Eritrea by suggesting that "unreliable" Eritrean conduct renders past treaties void. This "Genealogy of Aggression" seeks to solve Ethiopia's internal crises through external expansionism (Gebremariam 2025b). The hypocrisy is absolute: Abiy blames Eritrea for the ruins of the North while simultaneously planning a military campaign that would bring even greater ruin to the entire region.

Conclusion: The Failure of Leadership

The contemporary conduct of Abiy Ahmed is a study in the erosion of political and moral integrity. The transformation of the Ethiopian state from a democratic façade into a vehicle for revisionist aggression marks a dark chapter in the history of the Horn of Africa. The "litany of blames" currently directed at the Eritrean military is a transparent attempt to escape the shadow of his own decisions.

Abiy invited the intervention; he authorized the campaign; and he celebrated the destruction. To now claim the role of the victim is an insult to the memory of those who perished in a war that I, and many others, warned against from the beginning. The 'Red Sea Gambit' is the final act of a leader who has traded the promise of peace for a legacy of belligerence and historical distortion. Accountability cannot be avoided through the weaponization of ignorance. True stability in the region requires an acknowledgment of the truth: that while the destruction of the North involved multiple actors, the full and indivisible weight of accountability falls upon Abiy Ahmed. As the sovereign authority who invited a foreign military to wage war within his own borders, he alone bears the responsibility for the betrayal of his people and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe.

References

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