

## Reuters' Fake News

By LJDemissie

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“Fake news isn't just news you don't like. Fake news is designed to spread confusion and obscure the truth with lies, hoaxes and conspiracies, and there is a lot of it around...” according to [the BBC](#).

**Author's Note:** This article's goal is to encourage Reuters, the digital group Access Now, NMG and The East African's editorial boards to consider taking responsibility, including, making the necessary corrections for the fake news they spread and to apologize for publishing fake news and disinforming their readers, including their shareholders.

Furthermore, this piece's objective is also to bring to the attention of my readers the dishonesty of Reuters, including its correspondent in Ethiopia, Giulia Paravicini, and Dawit Endeshaw, Reuters' Journalist based in Ethiopia, Andrew McLaughlin, President of Access Now and Aggrey Mutambo, “Nation Media Group” [a.k.a. Nation] writer and The East African news website.

Reuters' Handbook of Journalism stated “Accuracy and fairness are [the hallmarks of Thomson Reuters journalism](#). Neither accuracy or nor fairness must ever be sacrificed for speed. If we lose our reputation for accuracy and fairness we lose everything. We reinforce to readers our commitment to accuracy and fairness by being totally honest about rectifying errors – promptly and openly...”



Reuters, which is owned by Thomson Reuters, has been one of my trustworthy sources of information, including news. However, I have now started questioning the accuracy, balance and fairness of some of its news stories.

For example, its article titled [Ethiopia's PM seeks to regain control over restive Tigray region](#) –which was written by Journalists Giulia Paravicini and Dawit Endeshaw – contains news that isn't true (fake news), incomplete citation, inaccurate information and biased news, among other things.



Fake news manifests: some of those who are involved in manufacturing the fake news against Ethiopia, from left to right Andrew McLaughlin, President of Access Now, Aggrey Mutambo, Nation's writer, Giulia Paravicini, Reuters' correspondent in Ethiopia, Dawit Endeshaw Reuters' Journalist who is based in Ethiopia. Note: McLaughlin company Access Now triggered the fake news. I obtained the photos from Access Now, Nation, ahramonline and Google Images' websites, respectively.

For instance, Reuters paraphrased: “His [PM Abiy Ahmed] government cut phone and internet communications to the region, according to the digital rights group Access Now, making it impossible to verify official accounts. Government officials accused the TPLF of shutting down communications.”

To make its paraphrase appear credible, to obscure the truth and to make finding the facts harder, Reuters didn’t provide information for a document it is referencing or a link where it got the information. Reuters’ deceit and rush to judgment to spread unverified news (false news) caused it to devalue the hallmarks of Thomson Reuters journalism, “Accuracy and fairness”.

### **Countering Reuters’ fake news source, Access Now, with evidence**

Without citing a source, on November 04, 2020, [Access Now claimed in its tweet](#) that “BREAKING: The government of Ethiopia has again shut down the internet. Mobile network, fixed-line internet & landline telephony have been cut in Tigray, as PM @AbiyAhmedAli declares a state of emergency & orders military intervention against Tigray People’s Liberation Front.” See “*Exhibit 1*” on page 4.

On the same day, Access Now, without citing a source, twice updated its tweet that it posted to break its false news on who shut down communication in Tigray.

To verify the breaking news Access Now tweeted, I spent significant amount of time researching its source. For example, I researched its website using “Ethiopia” as a key word. My search generated: “SEARCH RESULT PAGE FOR: ETHIOPIA”, among other things, the following “[Ethiopia shuts down telephone, internet services in Tigray](#) Aggrey Mutambo, the East African”.

Clicking on the above hypertext took me to The East African website page which contains Mutambo’s article titled “[Ethiopia shuts down telephone, internet services in Tigray](#)”; its URL is: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/rest-of-africa/ethiopia-telephone-internet-services-tigray-2731442>.

The search results confirmed that Access Now’s claim that “The government of Ethiopia has again shut down the internet. Mobile network ...” had no source because Mutambo in his article attributed its source of information to Access Now, which is the false news originator.

Moreover, to obscure the truth, to cover up the fake news it spread, to make it look like the false breaking news is viral, Access Now posted the inaccurate news on its website, by attributing Mutambo’s article captioned “[Ethiopia shuts down telephone, internet services in Tigray](#)”.

For the false stories it invented, Access Now’s post on its website referring Mutambo’s article as its source is “a trick some fake news outlets employ to send readers on a sort of “attribution goose chase””. See “*Exhibit 2*” on page 5.

Since Access Now acted in duplicity, its subsequent valid claims would arouse its readers', particularly Ethiopians suspicion if not the rejection. [LinkedIn stated](#) "Access Now defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining direct technical support, comprehensive policy engagement, global advocacy, grassroots grantmaking, legal interventions, and convenings such as RightsCon, we fight for human rights in the digital age."

[According to Reuters](#), "Nation Media Group [a.k.a. Nation] is a media house in East and Central Africa with operations in print, broadcast and digital media. ... The Company's brands offered in Kenya [including] ... The East African ... The Company operates various websites, including [www.nation.co.ke](http://www.nation.co.ke), [www.theeasaffrican.com](http://www.theeasaffrican.com) ..."

### **Refuting the fake news Nation and The East African spread**

Nation and The East African published the fake news against Ethiopia without verifying its accuracy and adequately attributing their source. To explain, the Nation's writer, Aggrey Mutambo, without including a link in his article and adequately citing his source he quoted Access Now and spread the false news against Ethiopia that: "The government of Ethiopia has again shut down the internet," Access Now said. [Furthermore] "Mobile network, fixed-line internet and landline telephony have been cut in Tigray, as PM declares a state of emergency and orders military intervention against Tigray People's Liberation Front."

**To summarize:** Conclusively, Access Now invented the fake news; and then it tweeted its false news. To make the fake news viral, Access Now posted its own false story on its website by quoting Mutambo's article. Using the fake news Access Now tweeted, the Nation's writer, Aggrey Mutambo wrote his article without providing sufficient citation for its source. The Nation and The East African media editorial board posted Mutambo's article on their news websites without verifying the accuracy of the article's contents.

Worst yet, Reuters, one of the most respected new media across the globe got caught red-handed, practicing deceit. It rushed to judgment and published its article quoting Access Now's fake breaking news. Furthermore, Reuters' article did not sufficiently cite its source that exposed Reuters' effort to obscure the truth and to make finding the truth more difficult. This caused Reuters to devalue the hallmarks of Thomson Reuters journalism, "Accuracy and fairness".

Reuters' Access Now, Nation and The East African articles regarding communications shut down in Tigray is a typical example of fake news. It is a fact that the mainstream media is on life support because, among other things, for its audience it has become too difficult and too time consuming to sort out true news from false or exaggerated news. For example, since Reuters, Access Now, Nation and The East African media obscured the truth, I spent a significant amount of my time to find the true news and to write this article. I invested my time to write this piece, for several reasons, primarily: to protect my beloved country, Ethiopia, from being a victim of fake media and dishonest journalists – who lack respect for their profession and readers.

I also invested my time to research and write this piece to try to contribute my fair share for the betterment of the media and to show my support for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed government's law enforcement operation against the terrorist TPLF's juntas a.k.a. [greedy day hyenas](#).

Spreading fake news and disinformation is simply wrong. Consequently, for spreading fake news stories, I encourage Reuters, the digital group Access Now, NMG and The East African's editorial boards to consider taking responsibility, including, making the necessary corrections for the fake news they spread and to apologize for publishing fake news and disinforming their readers. Since Reuters and NMG are publicly traded companies, I also encourage their editorial boards to offer an apology to their stock holders.

I dedicated this article to the victims of the terrorist TPLF's juntas a.k.a. the greedy day hyenas in Mai-Kadra western Tigray. Ethiopians will never forget their horrifying massacres, may their souls rest in peace. And also may God bless Ethiopia and all the people who defend her!

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### "Exhibit 1"



The image shows a screenshot of three tweets from the account 'Access Now' (@accessnow) posted on November 4. Each tweet features a green circular profile picture with a white globe icon. The first tweet is a 'BREAKING' announcement stating that the Ethiopian government has shut down the internet, mobile network, fixed-line internet, and landline telephony in Tigray, following a state of emergency declared by PM @AbiyAhmedAli. It has 38 replies, 701 retweets, and 500 likes. The second tweet discusses the importance of information in saving lives and the impact of communication shutdowns on Ethiopians and journalists, using the hashtag #KeepItOn. It has 3 replies, 69 retweets, and 83 likes. The third tweet calls for the reinstatement of stable and open internet and digital communication channels, also using #KeepItOn. It has 4 replies, 55 retweets, and 66 likes.

**Access Now** @accessnow · Nov 4  
BREAKING: The government of Ethiopia has again shut down the internet. Mobile network, fixed-line internet & landline telephony have been cut in Tigray, as PM @AbiyAhmedAli declares a state of emergency & orders military intervention against Tigray People's Liberation Front.  
38 701 500

**Access Now** @accessnow · Nov 4  
Information saves lives & access to communication channels is essential.  
Ethiopians cannot check on loved ones, assess safety risks, or follow developments in Tigray — adding confusion to a high-stress situation.  
Journalists are cut off & have difficulty reporting. #KeepItOn  
3 69 83

**Access Now** @accessnow · Nov 4  
#InternetShutdowns are an unacceptable and undemocratic method of government control.  
We call on the Ethiopian authorities to reinstate stable and open internet and all other digital communication channels immediately. #KeepItOn  
4 55 66

## "Exhibit 2"

 [OUR WORK](#) [CAMPAIGNS](#) [BLOG](#) [NEWSROOM](#) [ABOUT](#) [HELPLINE](#)

[HOME](#) / [SEARCH](#)

# SEARCH RESULTS FOR: ETHIOPIA

 **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**  
**Apagar, reducir y reprimir disidencia en línea: La nueva normalidad de África (primera parte)**  
Nwachukwu Egbunike, Khattab Hamed & Gabriela García Calderón Orbe, Global Voices  
[ACCESS NOW IN THE NEWS](#)

 **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**  
**Countries use Internet shutdown to control masses, experts say**  
Bamuturski Musinguzi, Daily Monitor  
[ACCESS NOW IN THE NEWS](#)

 **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**  
**Why Did Ethiopia's Leader Just Launch Airstrikes on the Tigray Region?**  
Abdi Latif Dahir & Declan Walsh, the New York Times  
[ACCESS NOW IN THE NEWS](#)

 **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**  
**Ethiopia shuts down telephone, internet services in Tigray**  
Aggrey Mutembo, the East African  
[ACCESS NOW IN THE NEWS](#)

**New Search**  
ethiopia

**Content Type**

- Blog (36)
- Access Now in the News (25)
- Press Releases (9)
- Campaign Site (1)
- Projects (1)

**Issue**

- Business and Human Rights (18)
- Content Governance (8)
- COVID-19 (4)
- Data Protection (3)
- Digital Security (9)
- Freedom of Expression (60)
- Internet Shutdowns (48)
- Net Discrimination (5)
- Privacy (9)

**Region**

- Global (48)
- Africa (40)
- Middle East & North Africa (7)