Twitter Thread by PATRIOT



PATRIOT
@scarfizal



It would, of course, border on the hyperbole to posit that the spectacular goof in Lagos, of Cable News Network (@CNN), arguably the globe's clear leader in broadcast news, would trigger its

But by its rather sloppy, tardy, lazy, yet arrogant handling of claims and counter-claims, over the Lekki tollgate, Lagos, sector of the #EndSARS protests, it is clear CNN has earned avoidable self-de-mystification.

No tears from here. It should stew in own arrogant juice!
For starters, @CNN came very late into the crisis — so scandalously late for a medium that could fairly claim the global patent to "Breaking news".

The protests raged at the Lekki sector from October 8 to 20, with the imposition of a curfew, by Governor Jide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos, to fend off crippling anarchy. The protesters' ill-fated attempt to resist and bust the curfew, on the night of October 20, led to the fictional

"massacre" freely bandied, after the unfortunate army shootings.
But the first CNN news feature was on November 18, though it had earlier made a tendentious claim, on its verified Twitter handle, that 78 souls had perished after the Lekki shootings.

The trumpeted "massacre" was, of course, a social media crusade gone awry — the upload of gushing emotions, of multiple but phantom deaths, in anticipation of gory body counts sure to come.
But alas! Those bodies never surfaced.

Yet, a conceited CNN felt obliged to run by its whimsical presumptions, than by hard facts its cameras could pan, rivet on and prove. It was an epochal debacle!

Still, the genesis was the penchant to presume the very worst, when the news breaks in Africa, by biased international news agencies and international human rights groups.

These bodies are backed by local satellites, always nosing — most times desperately — for rights abuses, to justify existence and garner nourishment from foreign sponsors. Aside from CNN,

@AmnestyNigeria too made a mess of itself, in its fictional claims over fatalities, from the Lekki protests.
The overarching image of the CNN debacle was its “star witness”, Obianuju Catherine Ude, aka DJ Switch — the slippery plank on which CNN anchored its story.

Since @CNN news anchor @nimaelbagir , was not at the scene, DJ Switch’s slew of video streams from the scene became rather convenient — too fatally convenient for the network’s brand equity.

Among the vignettes of fake videos @CNN fell for, as “proof” of protester-massacre, was footage from a movie, where a fictional victim was wrapped in a blood-stained Nigerian national flag!
DJ Switch might indeed be right on the scene.

But she was no credible witness, as she was no more than the visible face of “celebrities”-turned-activists that led the protests, surprised but thrilled at the newfound power and prestige the success of the protests had conferred on them;

and were bent — and recklessly so — on milking that newfound power to the limit.
Since the new (read social) media suffers little gate-keeping (the hallmark of old-school journalism), these actors often let fly anything, no matter how false,

ludicrous, exaggerated, distorted, or even plain fiction, through their social media channels. Indeed, this band of bitter and unruly activists, having conjured and pushed out claims of a “Lekki massacre,

” had followed up with photos and videos, dismissing the Lagos governor and wife as “murderers”, on account of the so-called “massacre”.
Indeed, in the heat of the moment, a stream of notable people, mainly film stars and allied entertainers,

were claimed to have been wiped out in the massacre. Though everyone, of these alleged slain, promptly resurrected, many even claiming they were nowhere near the Lekki toll gates on the curfew night, the tone was that of indulgence:

to be counted worthy to have been killed — though very much alive — in the crusade for a worthy cause! Thus emerged the social beatification of brazen lies, that led to further lies, that would trigger real deaths all over the country, in the following days.

It was at this juncture that @CNN came barging, in all its arrogant and bullying glory, cocksure that whatever it presumed and reported — even not captured by its sacred cameras, being essentially a video medium — must be true.

Even when its first “exclusive” fell flat, since its pictures didn’t match the massacre it implied, it refused to back down from its claim of reckless army shootings, against defenceless protesters.

By the time it released a follow-up report, bragging along the way it stood by its story, CNN was dancing in frenzy, completely naked, in the market place; since it was clear there was no story to stand by.

Its bluff that the army admitted its troops carried back-up live ammo, on the Lekki mission, was proof of its claim of reckless shooting and probable massacre, only earned the famed network more derision. It thus was forced to eat crow.

Still, it lacked the moral courage to apologise. It only indulged in half-hearted rationalisations, and latter-day curious clarifications, that nevertheless gave its battered brand no sheen.

Still, the CNN stumble should be a warning to everyone that the age of social media ushers fresh media hazards. That is why media houses must re-calibrate their quality control and gate-keeping checks.

Those checks and balances are what, over the ages, have earned the media the trust with which it does its work. Vanished trust is a problem for everyone. It could only foster nihilism — a total breakdown of norms.

That is a lose-lose for everyone.
@CNN may have earned its knock; and would be forced to be far more careful next time. But even that mis-reportage can't justify the army shootings at the Lekki toll gates.

The government should master more civil ways of crowd control than the military shooting in the air; thus prompting emotive lies about a massacre that was not. it should not make assertions it will contradict.

The army, by its double talk over whether or not there were shootings, opened the door for speculations and raised questions about its credibility.

But protesters must also imbibe conformity with the law, which grants them that right to protest. A protesting band, that tries to bust a legal curfew, in the face of creeping anarchy, could hardly be deemed "peaceful."

By that very act, it frontally challenges the legal coercion of the state, which the army exploited for a public relations nightmare.