

# "THE MEDIA AS SCAPEGOATS"

Information Minister Lai Mohammed has threatened to sanction the BBC and the Daily Trust for allegedly glorifying terrorists over the documentary on the Zamfara banditry. According to Lai Mohammed, giving publicity to bandits and terrorists amounted to glorification of their crimes against humanity. Journalist kadaria Ahmed supported Lai Mohammed by claiming that the BBC would not have done that kind of documentary in the UK. Really? She accused the BBC of double standards. I disagree with both Mohammed and kadaria Ahmed. Did Kadaria Ahmed forget that in September 2001 the BBC veteran journalist John Simpson travelled to Afghanistan to interview Osama Bin Laden, the notorious Al-Qaeda terrorist leader in his cave where he was hiding to avoid capture by US? Bin Laden even threatened to shoot "the infidel" as blindfolded Simpson was ushered into his cave. Did that amount to glorification of terrorism? Hearing the sides of bad guys in a conflict doesn't mean you support their cause or their messages. You can only be guilty of glorifying terrorists

Northern Nigeria. There is no way you can study the causes or motivations of these barbarians without talking to their leaders.

As long as journalists are not validating or endorsing the terrorists' messages, you can't accuse them of glorifying terrorist violence. Shekau's videos had been frequently broadcast or published by major international media organisations and news agencies. Does that mean they supported his messages or cause? Recently, the terrorists holding train passengers' hostage released a horrific video of the captives being flogged. Did Lai Mohammed expect the media not to publicise because it puts the government in bad light on account of its failure to rescue the victims?

A government that set free 400 so-called repentant terrorists without holding them accountable for their crimes against humanity lacks the moral justification to accuse the BBC and the Daily Trust of glorifying terrorists. A government that rewards terrorists with



or bandits if you portray their cause as just. If you don't justify their cause, it's misleading to accuse the media of glorifying terrorism. If I describe a terrorist or a bandit as a tough or fearless fighter, then I'm clearly guilty of glorifying terrorism or banditry.

In the documentary, the BBC reporter had asked the bandit leader who led the attack on the Government Girls College Jangebe, the justification for attacking innocent students and taking them hostage. The reporter persisted in asking him why he had to attack innocent girls whatever might be their grudges. The bandits' kingpin apologized for attack. I can't figure out how this interview amounts to glorification of terrorism or banditry. Terrorists and bandits are actors in the violence ravaging

garlands by giving them automatic clemency or pardon is grossly guilty of insulting the memories of the victims of terrorism, including our security personnel who were brutally murdered by terrorists. Not holding terrorists accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity is also an insult to the sensibilities of the families of terrorism victims. Instead of telling Nigerians why the government has failed to prosecute terrorists and bandits who are already in custody, Lai Mohammed is using the BBC and Daily Trust as scapegoats. In fact, the government's lackadaisical attitude to the prosecution of these barbarians gave terrorists the opportunity to attack the kuje prison to free their own members."