



2nd August, 2022

The Managing Director
TV3 Network Limited
Opposite the French Embassy
Kanda, Accra

**REJOINDER: FALSE PUBLICATION BY TEIYA ABOUT THE BASSARE
ETHNIC GROUP ON THE TV3 GHANA MOST BEAUTIFUL SHOW.**

We refer to the second week edition of the 2022 Ghana Most Beautiful Show on TV3 during which Teiya, the Northern Region representative told a palpable falsehood about the Bassare on your network. **Please note that Bassare, as referred to as Bassari/Basarawa by researchers quoted in this rejoinder is the same tribe.**

The above mentioned contestant, in her effort to tell a story about a Dagomba dance/drum music, narrated that a 'Nabiaw' to wit, a 'wicked Chief' who was a Bassare used to capture and sell the Konkomba, who were of the same patrilineal lineage to Na Abudu and Na Andani (Dagombas), into slavery. She continued that the action of the wicked Bassare Chief incurred the displeasure of Na Abudu and Na Andani who went to war with the Bassare and conquered them. According to her, it was during this war that that Dagomba dance/drum music originated as a victory dance over the Bassare.

Her narration should be retracted immediately because it is not factual, misleading and could potentially disturb the peaceful co-existent among the Bassare, Konkomba and Dagomba people in the Northern Region of Ghana.

To set the records straight, it is common knowledge that ethnic groups in northern Ghana practice patrilineal system of inheritance. Thus people belong to their patrilineal lineage. Therefore anybody who traces his lineage to Na Abudu and Na Andani (Dagomba kings) ought to be Dagombas. It therefore beats our imagination that she claims the Konkomba are paternally related to the Dogomba but are still Konkomba.

For her information, the Bassare, Konkomba, B'Moba and Chamba ethnic groups belong to the larger Gurma ethnic cluster whereas the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Mossi belong to the Mole-Dagomba cluster. These are dialectically different groups of people. There is no evidence

whatsoever that the Bassare captured and sold Konkomba, whom she claimed are paternal relatives of Dagomba, into slavery (point 6 below gives more detail).

We provide in detail historical evidence, backed with literature, the Bassare-Dagomba relations and the place of the Konkomba between the two.

1. The Bassare and their Dagomba neighbours had always lived peacefully. The major consumers of the Bassare iron had always been the Dagomba, Mamprusi and later Gonja who used it to manufacture weapons (de Barros, 2001, p.65).
2. In 1744-1745 the Dagomba were defeated and brought under the Asante empire and they were required to pay tribute in slaves to the Asante (Tamakloe, 1931, p.33; Ivor Wilks, 1975, p.305; B. G. Der, 1998, pp.9-10).
3. The Asante intrusion caused major shake ups in the north resulting in occasional raids. There were Dagomba attacks on the Bassare in 1856 (Tamkloe, 1931, p.38; Cornevin, 1957, p.85; Froelich and Alexandre, 1960, pp.259-260).
4. These were followed by multiple attacks in the 1860s which resulted in a three-year siege on Bassar, the Bassare capital in 1873-76 (Wilks, 1975, pp.67-68, 305-306; Cornevin, 1962a, p.57). The 1873-76 attack is the most important in our discussion because that was an open war fought for over three years after which the Bassare-Dagomba never went to war till now. The previous attacks were raids.
5. Now the question Teiya wrongly answered is, who won this war? We require your indulgence to quote copiously some three independent sources for the general public to draw their conclusion:

- a. Heinrich Klose, a German traveler in the 1890s, narrated the outcome of the 1873-76 war in detail as follows:

The Bassaris were beaten but still remained masters of their country in the end. They fled onto the hidden farms and watering places. The Dagomba occupied the Bassari huts and are said to have partly lived there and defended themselves against the constant attacks of the Bassari for three whole years. Because of the long period of war, famine finally broke out amongst the Dagombas who then had to give up Bassari and return to their own country (Klose, 1964, p.173).

- b. J. Withers Gill translated a Hausa manuscript in the Library of the School of Oriental Studies (London University) which says:

Abdullahi was a powerful ruler. He made war upon Basari. The fighting here was prolonged and strenuous and with varying fortune. But Abdullahi refused to give up until he had conquered the Basarawa and would not admit the chance of their conquering him. 'The King of Yendi' he boasted, 'is unconquerable. He holds mountains and rule numerous pagans who can fight'. But a time came when the King of Yendi called all his men together by night and told them he was about to return home in shame for the Basari were too much for him. Thereupon the head of the Hausas in Yendi, a really brave man called Muhamma Gamaji came to Abdullahi and said 'tomorrow if by the power of Allah we do not defeat the Basari men then I will die'. For this the King loaded him with presents. When in the morning the war drums were beaten the Basarawa came down in battle array. Muhamma Gamaji dashed forward on his horse and fell upon them spearing and cutting them down. Not one of the Dagombas followed him and the Basaras began to waver, but when they saw he was alone they stood fast and they shot him and he fell. They were about to take away his body when the King shouted and dashed forward himself, made an opening, so that the corpse could be taken up. It was brought to the camp where they buried it. The Dagomba then feared the Basarawa more and more and their warlike ardour began to cool until only the King himself wished to continue fighting. But he saw that **conquest was beyond his power and he gave up the fight and returned home**. The Basarawa had prevailed and remained unthreatened until the coming of Europeans (Withers Gill, 1920, p.11).

- c. Blair & Duncan-Johnstone provide us with a source closer to Dagomba because they collected the drum history of Dagbon. According to them:

Now Na-Abudulai was a strong Chief, and it was he who first refused to continue the payment of slaves to Ashanti. He also made war upon the Basari people, but failed to conquer them (Blair & Duncan-Johnstone, 1932, p.52).

6. It should be noted that the Bassari had never been dull and had not always been preyed upon. de Barros notes that:

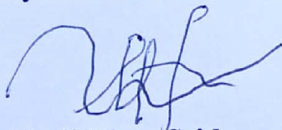
A combination of its relatively good soils when compared to the neighboring Konkomba, Kotokoli and Kabiye, and the Bassar ironworkers' ability to trade iron bloom and iron tools for food, slaves and other goods, resulted in the Bassar being relatively well off compared to their neighbors. ...The Bassar obtained slaves in three ways: (1) as captives in war; (2) as payment for a debt from the Kotokoli or even from other Bassar; and 3) by trading for them from the Kabiye (2009, p.14).

It is clear from this account that the Konkomba had never been bonded at any time in Bassare history. The topographic advantage of the Bassari territory coupled with its iron industry.

naturally attracted a wide range of people from different ethnic backgrounds who were fully assimilated (de Barros, 1985, p.57).

Despite all the available literature, Teiya still skewed the narrative to her personal advantage on TV3. If she is unaware of the facts and evidence of the relationship between the Bassare and Dagomba, the Bassare and Konkomba, and the Konkomba and Dagomba, she should learn from the above. But if she told the story in order to twist the facts of history, she has failed because the truth is only one. In either way, the Bassare deserve nothing but a retraction of the story and an unqualified apology through the same medium where the false narration was made.

We believe our rejoinder shall be treated with all the importance it deserves. A stitch in time, they say saves nine.



Alhaji Moro Seidu

(National President, Bassare Youth Association)

0244770491/0209121260