

# State Media, Terror Ties:

## How Turkey's Anadolu Agency Targets Americans

Report by

JewishOnline



### Executive Summary

Anadolu Agency (AA), established in 1920 as Turkey's official state news agency, has undergone significant transformation under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's administration. What was once positioned as Turkey's primary news service has evolved into a sophisticated propaganda apparatus that systematically promotes Islamist ideologies, maintains relationships with designated terrorist organizations, and actively disseminates anti-Western and anti-American narratives. These factors are made all the more concerning given AA also publishes its content in English on its large social media accounts to U.S.-based audiences, thereby serving as a direct vector for radicalization.

This analysis examines six critical dimensions of AA's operations: its ties to Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB); the mechanisms of state control that ensure alignment with government objectives; the employment of personnel with documented terror connections; the systematic promotion of anti-American and anti-Western content; influence on American citizens; and allegations of staging Hamas propaganda in Gaza. These findings reveal a concerted effort to weaponize journalism in service of Turkey's geopolitical ambitions and ideological agenda.

### **Key Findings**

- AA maintains documented relationships with Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood leadership through exclusive interviews, direct communications, and formal partnerships with terror-linked organizations like the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds.
- Multiple AA journalists and photographers have documented connections to terrorist organizations, including staff who received awards from Hamas officials, were present during the October 7 attacks, and actively promoted antisemitic content and terrorist operations.
- Under President Erdoğan's direct oversight, AA has been transformed from a news agency into a government mouthpiece that systematically promotes Islamist ideologies and anti-Western narratives.
- AA maintains substantial social media followings among American audiences (over 1.3 million combined followers) while lacking proper transparency labeling, allowing Turkish state propaganda to reach Americans without clear identification.
- A German investigation revealed that an AA photographer staged propaganda images in Gaza were later republished in major media outlets.

## 1. Ties to Hamas & Muslim Brotherhood

### Sympathetic Coverage

AA's coverage consistently presents Hamas in favorable terms, referring to Hamas terrorists as "[resistance fighters](#)" and providing uncritical platforms for their statements and propaganda. The agency has conducted exclusive interviews with former Hamas leaders such as [Ismail Haniyeh](#) and [Khaled Meshal](#), offering them prominent exposure to amplify their messaging without challenging their narratives or providing balanced reporting. This editorial approach directly reflects the Turkish government's position under President Erdoğan, who has long been a supporter and [patron](#) of Hamas.

Anadolu's content has amplified MB viewpoints. For instance, it highlighted the Brotherhood praising Erdoğan for [refusing to label them terrorists](#). Another [article](#) published by AA in November 2020 gave extensive platform to Malaysian Islamic organizations defending the Muslim Brotherhood against Saudi Arabia's terrorist designation, claiming the Brotherhood is a victim of oppression that adheres to democracy and the rule of law. Such examples illustrate how AA's editorial stance aligns with the Turkish government's Islamist-friendly outlook and connections, giving voice to groups that Turkey's leadership politically or ideologically supports.

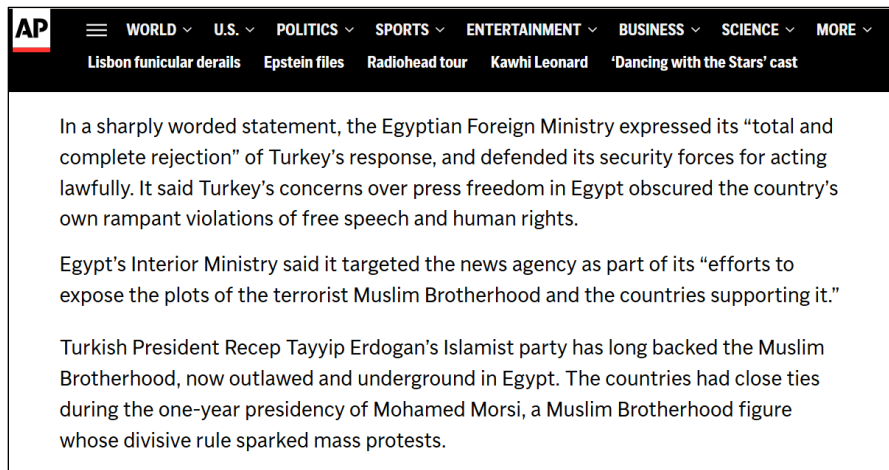


Credit: [Anadolu Agency](#)

## Egyptian Crackdown on AA Operations

In 2020, Egyptian police conducted [raid](#) on Anadolu Agency's Cairo office, resulting in the detention of four staff members. Egypt's Interior Ministry justified the operation as part of broader counter-terrorism efforts, stating that the action targeted the news agency due to its role in advancing "the plots of the terrorist Muslim Brotherhood and the countries supporting it." The Muslim Brotherhood remains a banned organization in Egypt following its designation as a terrorist group.

Egyptian authorities further alleged that AA had been disseminating "false news with the aim of distorting Egypt's image," reflecting Cairo's broader concerns about Turkish state media's coverage of Egyptian domestic affairs.



*Credit: [AP News](#)*

## Direct Communication Channels with the Muslim Brotherhood

In 2020, AA published an [article](#) revealing how Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Talaat Fahmy sent a Telegram to AA Director General Şenol Kazancı and the agency's editorial and administrative staff congratulating them on the 100th anniversary of its founding. The MB further described AA as a "distinguished media institution" and "voice that speaks the truth and builds the truth," thereby demonstrating the direct communication channels and mutual recognition between AA and Muslim Brotherhood leadership.

## **The League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds Partnership**

AA agreed to collaborate with the [League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds and Palestine](#) (LP4Q), a political lobby network comprising approximately 1,500 parliamentarians worldwide, “in order to serve the Palestinian and the cause of Jerusalem in the media and to confront the disinformation and falsification campaigns of the Israeli media machine.” The organization, which purports to work on behalf of Palestinian rights, in fact maintains extensive ties to terrorist networks, according to the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

LP4Q's president, [Abdullah Hussein al-Ahmar](#), exemplifies these connections through his documented roles as a board member of the U.S.-sanctioned "Union of Good" and chairman of the "Al Quds International Foundation," sanctioned in 2012 for providing financial support to Hamas. Al-Ahmar utilizes Turkey as an operational base for LP4Q activities that advance both Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood interests.

Following the Hamas-led October 7, 2023 massacre, in which 1,200 Israelis were murdered and 250 others taken hostage, LP4Q leaders including Mohammad Makram Balawi shared platforms with senior Hamas operatives such as [Khaled Mashaal](#). In November 2023, LP4Q hosted Hamas leader [Ahmed Bahr](#) for an event titled "Ways to protect Al Aqsa Mosque from Israeli aggression." Bahr was subsequently [eliminated](#) by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza.

## **2. State Control and Government Agenda Promotion**

Anadolu Agency operates as a state-run news agency where President Erdoğan has exercised significant influence over key appointments and [editorial direction](#). [Media Bias/Fact Check](#), a media credibility assessment site, rates AA as "an agency controlled by the right-wing ruling party" with "a very strong pro-government state bias." According to [State Media Monitor](#), most of Anadolu Agency's budget is sourced from state subsidies, as reported by local journalists.

In 2014, the appointment of [Şenol Kazancı](#), Erdoğan's former aide and confidant, as AA's Director General exemplifies this control structure. This placement ensures alignment between AA's editorial output and the ruling AKP party's messaging requirements, effectively eliminating any potential for independent journalistic judgment.

Following Turkey's adoption of an executive presidential system in 2018, Erdoğan placed Anadolu Agency under the [direct control](#) of the Communications Directorate of the Turkish Presidency by presidential decree.

A [Reuters investigation](#) in 2022 revealed that during the 2019 Istanbul municipal elections, AA abruptly stopped releasing election results when the opposition candidate was leading, creating "confusion and paralysis" in newsrooms as managers awaited government direction on how to report the outcome. The investigation found that AA, as "the only media source for election results," serves as a critical information gatekeeper in Turkey's centralized media control system coordinated by the Communications Directorate. Notably, AA, which distributes video news in English via Reuters, did not respond to Reuters' request for comment about its coverage of the elections.

Turkey's Constitutional Court later [ruled](#) in 2021 that placing AA under direct control of the Communications Directorate violated the agency's constitutional autonomy. However, Erdoğan's influence over AA's editorial narratives remains intact even after this ruling – owing to the authoritarian nature of his rule – and AA continues to be universally recognized as state-run.

Moreover, the watchdog group Nordic Monitor [reported](#) on instances where AA published fabricated or misleading reports to support Ankara's political objectives. During the aftermath of the failed 2016 coup attempt, AA disseminated false information based on manipulated intelligence documents to support the government's narrative while simultaneously censoring portions that referenced Erdoğan's documented connections to ISIS and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Additionally, AA consistently – and arguably inaccurately – reports stories that portray Turkey in a positive light. For example, AA has published glowing stories touting the country's efforts and achievements in the sphere of [multiculturalism](#) and [women's rights](#).

However, Freedom House graded Turkey a 33/100 in its "[Freedom in the World 2025](#)" report, writing that "President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose Justice and Development Party (AKP) has ruled Turkey since 2002, has become increasingly authoritarian over the past decade, consolidating power through constitutional changes and the imprisonment of political opponents, independent journalists, and members of civil society. The AKP has responded to recent economic challenges

and municipal election defeats by intensifying its efforts to suppress dissent and limit public discourse.”

Specifically, Freedom House notes that “Turkey’s rates of femicide and gender-based violence—which often involve domestic violence and attacks by current or former intimate partners—are among the world’s highest” and that the government discriminates against cultures and religions like the Kurdish population.

### 3. AA Journalists Linked to & Praising Terror

AA has employed multiple journalists and other staffers with documented connections to terrorist organizations, creating systematic compromises in editorial independence and professional integrity. These relationships extend beyond ideological sympathy to include active collaboration, award ceremonies, and operational coordination.

#### Hakan Copur – AA Chief Washington Correspondent

One day after the October 7 massacre, Copur shared an [image](#) stating "I Stand with Palestine" and made another [post](#) stating: "Isn't it ironic how the US/Europe, which provide unlimited and unconditional support to Ukraine against Russia's invasion attempt, support the occupying side when it comes to Israel's occupation?" In this post, Copur attempted to portray Western support for Israel's right to defend itself against Hamas terrorism as hypocritical. He did this by drawing a false equivalence between Hamas's terrorist attacks on civilians and Ukraine's legitimate defense against Russian military invasion.



Credit: [Hakan Copur on X](#)



In 2023, [Nordic Monitor](#) revealed that Copur was flagged during a confidential probe into Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Quds Force operations in Turkey. Court documents revealed his connections to the [Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief](#) (IHH), described as a logistics supplier for al-Qaeda operations. The IHH recognized Çopur's volunteer work with the organization.

Additionally, Copur made an [X post](#) in 2015 questioning why ISIS does not attack U.S. or Israeli targets, ostensibly suggesting that ISIS is connected to or has coordinated with Israel and the U.S.

[FARA](#) (Foreign Agents Registration Act) disclosures filed November 4, 2022 list Copur as a registered foreign agent for Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), confirming his formal role in Turkish government information operations within the United States.

### **Omar El-Qatta – Photojournalist**

The [Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis \(CAMERA\)](#) documented [El-Qatta's](#) extensive social media activity promoting antisemitic sentiment and praising Hamas operations. In 2013, El-Qatta was [photographed](#) receiving an award from former Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. El-Qatta has taken numerous [photos](#) in Gaza that have been featured in AA.



On November 30, 2013 he posted on X (then Twitter): "Awaken a war, light a fire and let it be a curse upon the

Jews and their supporters." Additional posts praised former Hamas spokesman Abu Obaida, referring to him as "oh terror of the Jews" and expressing support for his operations. While these social media posts have since been deleted, their documentation reveals the depth of ideological alignment and active support for terrorist operations.

*Credit: [guffanti\\_marco on X](#)*



## Ashraf Amra – Photojournalist

Amra was present during  [Hamas's October 7, 2023 attacks](#), capturing real-time photos of the massacre. His photographs, credited to "Ashraf Amra/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images," documented Hamas breaching Israeli security infrastructure. Reuters selected Amra's October 7 photographs as "[Pictures of the Month](#)," confirming his presence during the attacks.

Amra has taken infamous photos of former Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, including a 2018 [photo](#) from a Hamas [rally](#) in Khan Yunis showing Sinwar flaunting a handgun he allegedly took from Israeli soldiers. Other notable [photos](#) by Amra include Sinwar at a Hamas rally in Gaza City in 2021, holding up a young child holding a rifle.

In September 2023, Amra received a [hospital visit](#) from former Hamas official Ismail Haniyeh and Hamas official [Taher al-Nunu](#) while being treated for injuries sustained during Gaza border riots. During this visit, Haniyeh [expressed](#) appreciation for Amra's role in exposing "crimes of the occupation," while Amra committed to continuing his "national role" despite his injuries. This high-profile visit represented the second documented interaction between Haniyeh and Amra, with the first occurring in [2012](#).



Haniyeh visiting Amra. Credit: [Gaza8City on Instagram](#)

Amra has also been [photographed](#) posing with [Salama Maarouf](#), head of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office.

## Additional Personnel

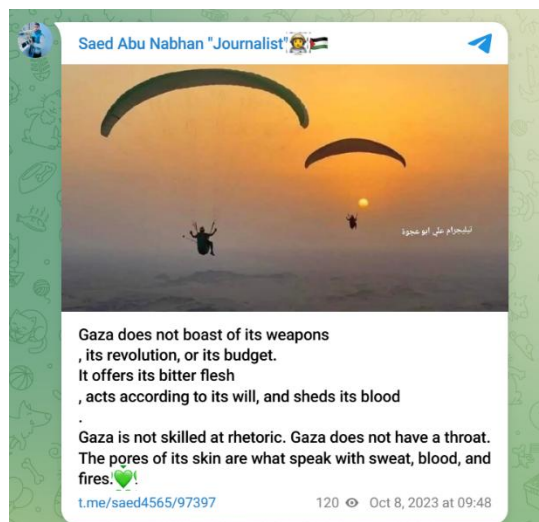
AA photographer [Ali Jadallah](#) received a [journalism award](#) from the Hamas-run Government Media Office in 2022 and was also photographed posing alongside Maarouf, head of the Hamas-run Gaza government media office. In 2024, Jadallah received the "[Best Photo of the Year](#)" award from the Alliance of Mediterranean News Agencies (AMAN) for his work with AA.

Hani al-Shaer, a [freelance journalist](#) with AA, [documented](#) Hamas terrorists inside Israel on October 7, 2023, after infiltrating with them through security barriers. His personal Facebook page

appears to contain further documentation of his October 7th presence, featuring [additional photos](#) of infiltrators posing next to a destroyed IDF tank after breaking through the security fence.

[Saed Abu Nahan](#), a former freelance cameraman with AA, was eliminated by Israeli forces on January 10, 2025. He posted a [flyer](#) praising a deceased Hamas terrorist and shared photos from the terrorist's [funeral](#), describing him as his "dear friend" in the captions.

On December 3, 2023, he published a [post](#) on his [Telegram channel](#) depicting armed terrorists with the comment: "Men take revenge with weapons. It's time to clash" accompanied by hashtags referencing Hamas's October 7 operation codename "Al-Aqsa Flood." On the day of October 7, he made posts glorifying Hamas terrorists who infiltrated southern Israel via [paragliders](#) and [trucks](#).



*Credit: [Saed Abu Nahan on Telegram](#)*

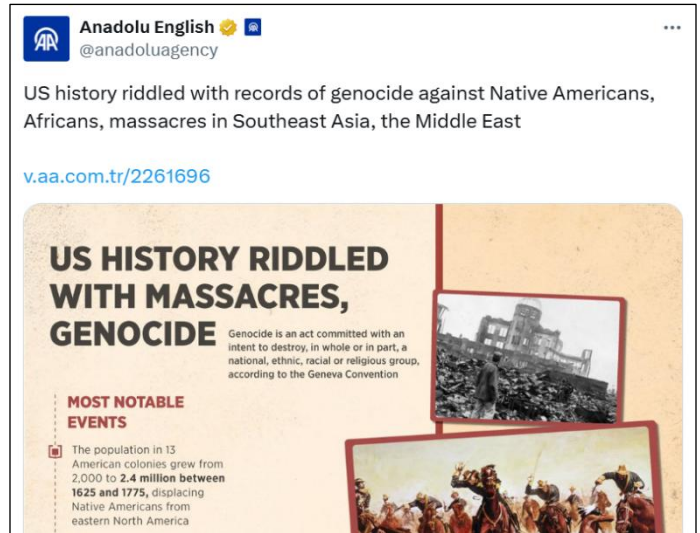
According to what appears to be one another of Nabhan's [Facebook accounts](#), he also worked for Safa News Agency, a [Hamas-affiliated](#) news outlet, with his [photographs](#) credited on Safa's [official Telegram channel](#).

[Ramzy Abu al Qumsan](#), who describes himself as a journalist from Jabalia, also goes by the name "Ramzy Mahmoud," and has [documented work](#) with AA. He was present capturing photos at [Hamas propaganda ceremonies](#), and took a [selfie](#) of himself attending a ceremony where he referred to [Keith Siegel](#), an Israeli- American civilian kidnapped by Hamas, as an "Israeli prisoner," adopting Hamas's propaganda terminology for hostages.

#### **4. Promotion of Anti-American and Anti-Western Narratives**

Anadolu Agency targets Western audiences, especially Americans, with content that frequently presents the United States in negative terms, emphasizing themes of systemic racism and oppression while amplifying divisive social issues and controversial topics.

For example, on November 16, 2023, AA ran a [story](#) on Native Americans, which attributed the hardships they face to "genocide, displacement, seclusion, removal and ongoing oppression and intergenerational trauma," adding that "These conditions were enacted by way of military campaigns, diseases, broken treaties, and laws by the US government to disenfranchise and discriminate against Native and Indigenous peoples."



Credit: [Anadolu Agency on X](#)

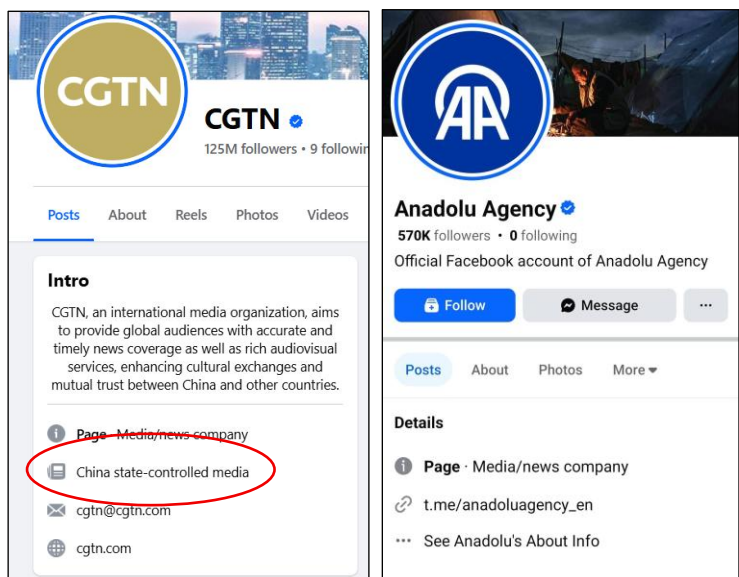
Additionally, AA has [posted graphics](#) on social media accusing U.S. history of being “riddled with records of genocide against Native Americans, Africans, massacres in Southeast Asia, the Middle East.” Other articles and content from AA have promoted the narrative that the U.S. suffers from [institutional racism](#) against black Americans.

The focus of a Turkish-based outlet on these domestic U.S. issues suggests a potential strategy of stoking social tensions rather than providing balanced international news coverage.

## 5. Influence on Americans and Lack of Transparency

According to AA’s website, the network maintains a presence at [four U.S. locations](#): Washington D.C.’s National Press Building; the PRESS room in the Pentagon; the PRESS suites at New York’s UN Plaza; and 211 East 43rd Street. Although directly controlled by the Turkish government, it has not registered under FARA, potentially in violation of American law.

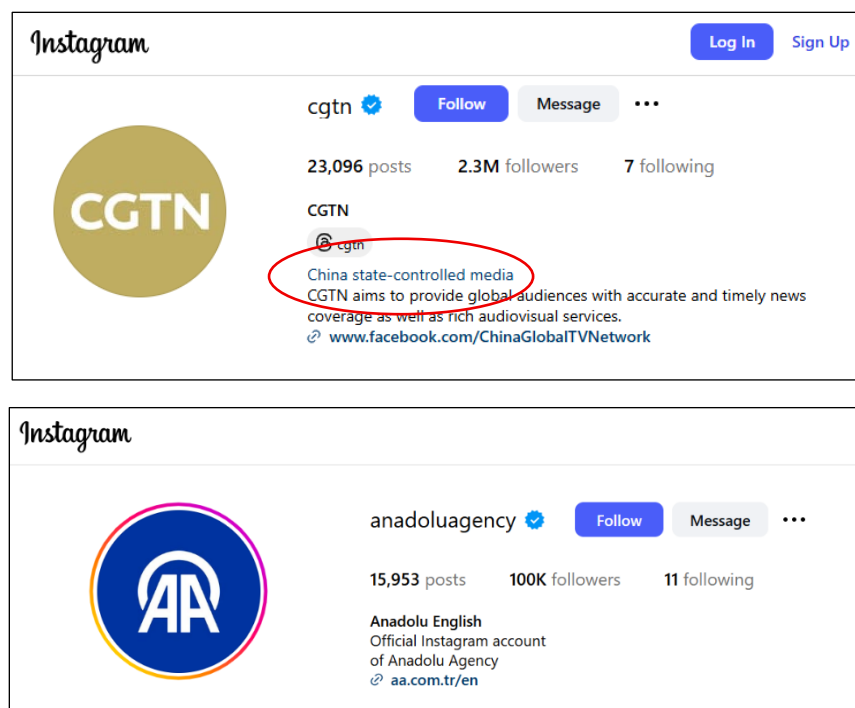
AA's English-speaking accounts maintain substantial followings across major social media platforms as of September 2025: [Facebook](#) with 570k



Credit: [CGTN](#) & [Anadolu Agency](#) on Facebook

followers, [YouTube](#) with 226k followers, [Instagram](#) with 99.6k followers, [TikTok](#) with 236.8k followers, and [X](#) with 245k followers. Despite this significant reach and AA's status as a state-controlled media outlet, only AA's YouTube account carries a "state-controlled media" label that informs users about the nature of the content they are consuming.

This labeling inconsistency is particularly notable when compared to other state media outlets. For example, while [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) (both owned by Meta) attach the label to China Global Television Network's (CGTN) pages, they have not applied similar transparency measures to AA's accounts.



Credit: [CGTN](#) & [Anadolu Agency](#) on Instagram

## 6. Allegations of Staged Gaza Photographs

Concerns about Anadolu Agency's Gaza coverage gained international attention through a major investigation in August 2025 that raised serious questions about the agency's photojournalistic practices and editorial standards.

German newspaper *Bild* published a [widely read investigation](#) that accused AA photographer Anas Zayed Fteiha of staging Hamas propaganda. Fteiha's work, distributed through Anadolu and picked up by major international media outlets including CNN, BBC, and German publications,

was characterized as serving Hamas propaganda goals by generating sympathy in the West and anger toward Israel. The investigation quoted historian and photography expert Gerhard Paul, who told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: “In southern Gaza, Hamas exercises complete control over image production.” Soon after the Bild investigation was published, several European news agencies [cut ties](#) with Fteiha.

## **Conclusion & Recommendations**

The evidence presented in this analysis reveals that Anadolu Agency has evolved far beyond its original mandate as Turkey's state news service into a sophisticated propaganda apparatus that poses significant concerns for Western democratic societies. Under state control, AA has cultivated relationships with designated terrorist organizations, employed personnel with terror connections, and weaponized journalism to advance Turkey's geopolitical and ideological objectives.

Perhaps most troubling is AA's deliberate targeting of American audiences through substantial social media platforms that lack proper state-media transparency labeling. This creates a direct vector for Turkish government propaganda to influence U.S. public opinion while masquerading as legitimate journalism. Combined with AA's documented promotion of anti-American narratives and its staff's active participation in terrorist propaganda operations, these findings suggest a coordinated effort to undermine Western interests and democratic values. The international community, particularly U.S. policymakers and social media platforms, must recognize AA not as a conventional news organization but as an arm of Turkish state influence operations that requires appropriate regulatory oversight and transparency measures.

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