

**A War of propaganda: a showdown between the Government of Ethiopia and the ONLF**  
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Lately, the central government of Ethiopia along its Somali Regional state has been on the offensive to secure the heart and minds of the Diaspora communities. The heart and the soul of the Ogaden communities in the Diaspora have been held by ONLF for the past 18 years. Since the newly installed president of the Somali Regional State, Abdi Mohamed Omar become the security chief in 2007, the Diaspora communities in Europe and North America has been slowly cracking. The Somali Regional government launched effective counter-propaganda war to take hold of the hearts and minds of the Diaspora communities and to outperform the ONLF in its own traditional sphere of influence. Abdi Mohamed skillfully managed the counter-propaganda war, establishing firm tentacles within the Diaspora communities and gathering crucial information on ONLF with the view of discrediting the movement and winning over some of its erstwhile supporters. He was instrumental in creating several websites including [www.eegga.com](http://www.eegga.com) and [www.cakaaranews.com](http://www.cakaaranews.com) to communicate with Diaspora. However, ONLF has taken the Diaspora communities support for granted and did not offer any change of venue from their traditional emotion and name calling strategy.

According to the [Institute for Propaganda established](#) 1937, there are seven propaganda techniques: Name Calling, Glittering Generalities, Transfer, Testimonial, Plain Folks, Card Stacking, and Band Wagon. ONLF had enjoyed for a while the upper hand by using a couple of these techniques. The infamous one is Name Calling, ONLF supporters on the ground and affiliated web sites has created a fear by calling names opponent to character assassinate individual personalities. Anyone who oppose is known as “Dabaqoodhi” without any substantial proof and now for UWSLF, the new coined word is, “Kitaabo Xoorka” as though they are divine and are the only ones chosen for the struggle, a name calling based on anger and emotion rather than factual evidence and reasoning.

The second most used is Transfer: to use the prestige and status of a positive vision such as liberty or Xornimo, remanding supporters about the value of freedom and the flag as symbol of unity and sovereignty and constantly reiterating the heroes who passed away fighting colony and repression in the Somali Region. Furthermore, Band Wagon is used to encourage folks to follow others who are scarifying their lives and their limited income for freedom.

Around 2007, when Somali regional State started to counter the propaganda war, they started in the wrong foot using a very harsh technique, intimidating ONLF member’s family and loved ones using streaming videos trough [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and affiliated websites. However, this approach has simply alienated the minority supporters in Diasporas. Nonetheless, it seems that the region have learned from their past mistake and are fighting back in the traditional strong hold of ONLF to change the attitude and possibly the behavior of Diaspora communities. As you could see from

the pictures below, the Somali Regional government is using the same flag ONLF cultivated as symbol of their struggle to enhance their image as welcoming and partners in peace negotiation.

Yet, [Prime Minister Meles press](#) conference was a anticlimax to the entire peace effort, arrogantly with victorious tone, he communicated to his constituency that the hideous Islamic terrorist who were responsible for all of the attacks in Addis have finally taken the path of peace and have lied down their arms. Sadly, he failed to recognize and publically acknowledge UWSLF's difficult decision as peace partners. He also made it difficult for the Somali region officials to appeal for the larger Diaspora group due to his lack of understanding of the complex Somali clan system by uttering pretense information as though one Ogaden sub clans is taking the peace and the other taking the path of violence, a grave miss communication of propaganda war.

Thanks to UWSLF and Salaxdin's ONLF that has shattered the curtain of name calling fear and accepted to abide by the Ethiopian constitutions, today, the war of propaganda is in the hands of the Ethiopian government and The Somali Regional administration. Accordingly, this situation has given all the momentum and ammunitions to wage the war of propaganda in the turf of somewhat once secure territory of ONLF. Albeit, the case show by the Ethiopian government so called peace accord staged drama and the second phase negotiation for Salxudin's group in Washington DC, the ONLF put on their own show case to inform supporters that they are still in control in their familiar terrain in Stockholm and Minneapolis. Taking advantage of powerful photos and images pouring out from respective supporter websites to influence followers, I decided to present the power of image and picture in the war of propaganda. I have collected significant pictures from various websites and wanted to display a photo voice exhibition to put in prospect the subject matter. Please watch the photo voice collected from perspective affiliated websites. The left side of the pictures is from ONLF Admiral Mohamed Omer's wing and the right column is UWSLF/ ONLF (Salaxdin wing) and the Ethiopian side. I want thank both sides for documenting the present, time will tell the future. They say that a picture is worth a thousand words



ONLF Chairman IN Sweden



Sheekh Ibraahim and Dr. Sheferow Tegla signing the accord



Admiral Mohamed ONLF supporters in Minneapolis



UWSLF Delegations in Addis



Admiral Mohamed Omer and his supporters in Sweden



UWSLF Delegations in Addis



Admiral Mohamed Omer and his supporters in Sweden



Abdi Mohamed and other Ethiopian officials



Admiral Mohamed Omer and his supporters in Sweden



Salaxdin with his top political advisor Ardo Waliyo in DC



ONLF supporters



ONLF and Guled in Jigjiga



ONLF supporters



Welcoming Gift to Chairman Ibrahim

Sources of Pictures:

FROM ONLF Admiral Mohamed Omer side

[www.ogaden.com](http://www.ogaden.com)

[www.ogadennet.com](http://www.ogadennet.com)

[www.hanqadh.com](http://www.hanqadh.com)

[www.qorahay.com](http://www.qorahay.com)

From Ethiopian side /ONLF/ UWSLF

[www.cakaaranews.com](http://www.cakaaranews.com)

[www.Xaajo.com](http://www.Xaajo.com)

[www.Dhanaan.com](http://www.Dhanaan.com)

[www.somalimirror.com](http://www.somalimirror.com)

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