

Faysal Waraabe's descent into moral Barbarism

By Ahmed A. Hassan

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Something curious has happened in the Somali peninsula since the civil war. Most Somalis have become too accustomed to hatred. It has become a force that has displaced the values and culture of the Somali people and is spread by none other than the nation's so called politicians and opinion makers. Although average people do not subscribe to this sort of bigotry, none would deny the fact that overall collective relations among the sectors of the Somali society is no longer as good as it was in the not so distant past.

Conscientious people are still trying to make people aware of the negative outcome of spreading hatred in the society. Yet, bigots are still at large and many of the core values of the Somali society are losing ground at a remarkable rate.

This politics of hate that has been setting the political agenda of today's Somalia is a new phenomenon that has deeply penetrated the psyche of the Somalis of today. Sectarianism and clanism are more influential today in Somalia than in its past history. Astonishingly in this homogenous society this kind of politics plays the same role that racialism played in the history of European fascism.

Unlike many of their counterparts in the west, bigots in Somalia do not have discernible paraphernalia that sets them apart from ordinary folks such as tattoos, black boots, brown shirts and / or ear-rings. However, they are as much consumed by venomous fury for the so called other as their counterparts in the west.

One such politician is "Somaliland's" Faysal Ali Waraabe (the Hyena) who thrives on the politics of division and hatred. He can be described as the poster boy of today's **Somali Interahamwes** (Hutu death squads). Mr. Waraabe is a former collaborator of the previous military dictatorship of Siyad Barre who has successfully reinvented himself as a hardcore advocate for the secession of the north. To cover this shameful past he has become famous for his thoughtless diatribes and hate message that he often directs at the pro union regions of northern Somalia and of course the Somalis from the South.

The Hyena's Fervent Call to Genocide

[In a recent debate between the leadership of the three recognized political parties of "Somaliland"](#), Mr. Waraabe who is the chairman of the third party (UCID), avowed his belief that Somaliland can achieve recognition - *only and only if* - it ethnically cleanses and commits genocide against the people of the eastern regions of northern Somalia. He chastised the leadership of Somaliland for failing to bring the eastern regions into their fold. He further rhetorically stated: *"If we are worrying about committing genocide against these people [the people of Sanaag & Sool] we will never be able to realize our goal of establishing a state."* He reaffirmed also his distorted belief that only a state that is ready to shed others blood can expect to be recognized as a nation on its own.

Even though Mr. Waraabe was described by many as "ill educated, not brainy and in some cases foolish", nonetheless his venomous rhetoric should be taken seriously as he is a public figure who has some influence on at least some of the populace in Somaliland.

Worrisome Silence

What is worrisome, however, is the absolute mute response from the leadership and the masses of Somaliland. A number of questions arise with regard to this. There can be no dispute surely that these messages are agitations to commit murder and genocide against fellow Somalis, who happen to share culture, religion and kinship with Waraabe's own constituency in Somalia's northern regions. They go beyond the routine tirade of hate speech and are actually intended to have a chilling effect on a large segment of the people of the northern regions.



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In Somaliland dissent from the dominant orthodoxy of secession is treasonable which in democratic societies would have been considered fundamental and necessary for the vigor and vitality of democratic governance. Indeed, it is so to the extent that their commitment to democracy bears serious questioning. A case in point is the expulsion of Mr. Jama Mohamed Qaalib, one of the most prominent pro unity leaders in the nation, as well as others from Hargeisa simply because of their faith in united, stable and peaceful Somalia.

The language Mr. Waraabe used in his call for mayhem and slaughter was akin to the language used and sentiments put forward by the German Nazi and self styled expert on Jews: Julius Streicher, who used his newspaper, Der Stuermer, to disseminate hate against Jews. He was sentenced to death by the Nuremberg Tribunal for his murderous incitement. In this context also one can recall that the International Tribunals for Rwanda handed down life sentences to Hutu Radio Broadcasters/Commentators for inciting listeners to "hatred and murders." In the dark alleyways of hate Mr. Waraabe's call for genocide is not matched anywhere in past Somali history hindering the pursuit of peace in the entire Somali peninsula.

Dangers of political extremism

What is especially worrying is that this ideology has now secured representation in the government of Somaliland — albeit one that navigates the spectrum from the unquestionably minor to the definitely absurd.

The danger posed by Waraabe, given that his party counts amongst its members influential elders, politicians and other professionals, is the threat it constitutes to the peaceful coexistence of the society. His party seems to be in the forefront of defining, propagating and consolidating the orthodoxy of the times.

In this respect the administration of Somaliland has to conform as a fellow traveler or open itself up to the charge of overlooking such accepted belief by its silence on its most detestable aspects. Otherwise it should take the lead in challenging and exposing it for what it is — institutionalized hate parading as love of a country.

Mr. Waraabe is most secure within the corridors of influence and power in the portals of Somaliland and he has not been asked yet to explain himself. The administration and leadership of Somaliland, in any event, has treated us to their version of the "*either you are with us or against us*" school of governance. There was a time when they themselves dealt in opposition; now it is with turncoats, it seems.

Hate and division

The UCID party and its leader are the vicious comic strips of the ideological keystone of hatred and clanism. What is especially mystifying is how people of good standing in its midst and in the Somaliland populace in general can condone the public propagation of such sentiments of hate. Since we have yet to see a member from the leadership of Mr. Waraabe's party who has publicly differed with his call for ethnic cleansing, than we have no choice but to assume that they share also his ill will for his fellow compatriots and nefarious philosophy.

At a time of conflict and of one in which the human rights and humanitarian situation in Somalia cries out for help, material as well as moral, one would have expected that people of good will would rise to the occasion to spread the message of hope, compassion, reconciliation and unity, rather than that of hate and division.

Likewise the common men and women of Somaliland with their religious leaders, academics and intellectuals who are the ones who bequeathed legitimacy to organizations like Mr. Waraabe's should demand accountability from their leaders. However, sadly it seems that is not the case. It is a measure of the crisis we are caught in these trying times and the challenges we need to confront.

Another concern is the general public's acceptance of propaganda of this malicious kind. This is complemented by the placid acceptance of hate in the public domain. These are often written off as mere politics of little or no concern and harmless diatribes.

Concluding remarks

What is of concern here is the absence of resentment and disgust in respect to the Somali public affairs. This suggests the collective numbing of moral compassion throughout the more than the two decades of civil war and the vilification shaped by violent zero sum politics. Atrocious acts have become an every day

occurrence in the Somali peninsula, and yet people of good conscious fail to stand up to these moral pervers. What does the leadership of UCID has to say about this? What is the public's response to Mr. Waraabe's call for genocide?"

As the space for standing up for what is a right contract and as moral principles, become things of the faint distant past, hope for the future too will retreat.

It is time for the people of Somaliland and their civic organizations to stand up and be counted in a collective effort to reverse the slide into a clanish political culture which will be the plaything of narrow and exploitive politicians. Where are the voices of Somaliland's intellectuals, the half dozen Hargeysa-based Human Rights organizations, the Somaliland Forum, and other civil society groups?

It is time that Mr. Waraabe and like minded ilk were told by the public at large that their politics of hate and malice stemming from some deep sense of hurt, no doubt, cannot determine the future of Somalis. Hate will ultimately destroy everyone.

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