

THE BOOK BY OPIYO OLOYA IS A STORY ABOUT THE UGANDA PEOPLE'S DEFENCE FORCES' ROLE IN SOMALIA

Oulanyah bemoans poor reading culture

By Farooq Kasule

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Jacob Oulanyah, has decried the poor reading culture among Ugandans, despite availability of a multitude of resourceful reading materials both on the Internet and in libraries.

Oulanyah made the remarks on Saturday at Garden City in Kampala during the public signing of a book titled *Black Hawk Rising*. The book, which has 250 pages, was written by Opiyo Oloya and valued at sh145,000. Over 50 people attended the function. Book signing is an event at a bookshop or library, where an author affixes his signature to the title page.

The book, which was launched by President Yoweri Museveni during the Heroes Day celebrations in Buikwe district last year, is a story about the Uganda People's Defence Force's (UPDF) role in maintaining peace in Somalia.

"I encourage the young people to read it because of the abundance of what to read, unlike in the past," the Deputy Speaker said.

"I remember in primary school we had a book called English Composition and Grammar which had two missing pages, but I moved seven kilometers to another



Oulanyah

school to copy the missing pages in my handwriting because there were no photocopiers," Oulanyah recalled.

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Oulanyah promised to persuade the authorities to circulate the *Black Hawk Rising* to all schools in the country, saying it tells a story every Ugandan should know.

He noted that with Somalia in pain, Africa cannot rise and commended the UPDF and President Museveni for playing a leading role in the promotion of peace in Somalia.

The UPDF spokesperson Brig. Richard Karemire, commended Oloya for telling the UPDF's contribution in

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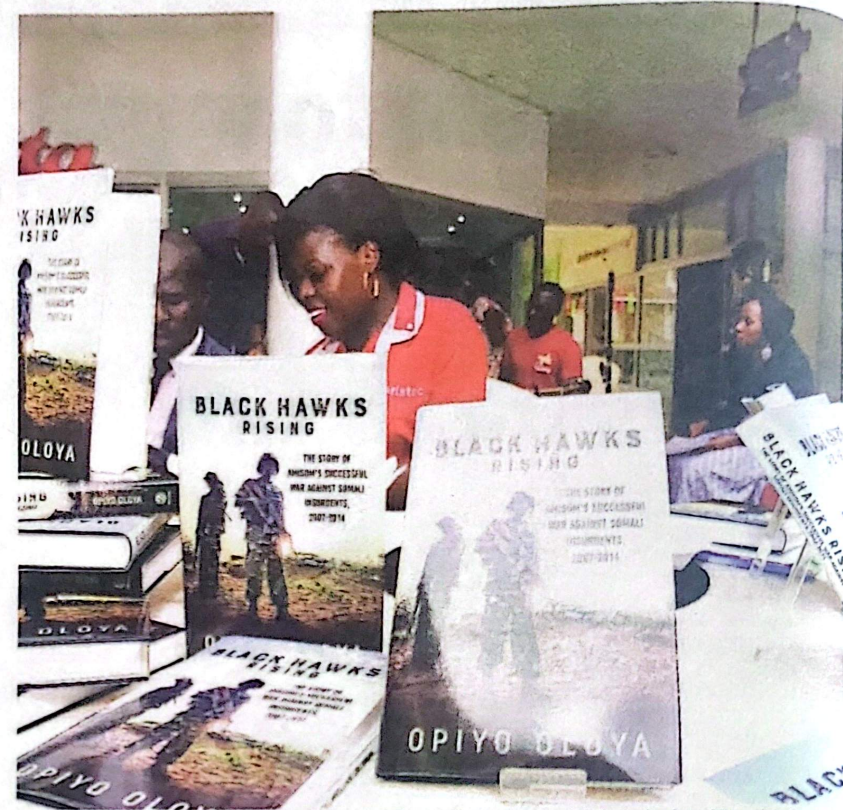
**ONLY 20%
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Somalia, stating that many times UPDF came out to talk about its contribution in Somalia, many people thought it was just propaganda.

"If Oloya had not come up to tell this big story, probably some other person would have jumped on it and written it his or her way with interests depending on where he comes from," Karemire said.

He noted that the book entails clear reflections of Uganda's interests in participating in the peacekeeping mission in Somalia.

In his remarks, Oloya said when Kenya and other countries joined the peace mission in Somalia in 2011, he realised the need to document the work spearheaded by UPDF since 2007 in the country so



A worker at Aristoc Booklex selling the book *Black Hawks Rising*, during the signing ceremony on Saturday. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

that it is not underestimated.

"I said if we do not tell our story, nobody will do it for us" Oloya said.

He urged Ugandans to start believing in their abilities, stating that UPDF's achievement in Somalia is now recognised internationally. "We need to stop putting ourselves down and draw our support behind ourselves," Oloya said.

He revealed that his first flight to Somalia was realised when he met Gen. Katumba

Wamala in a city restaurant.

"While I was seated in the restaurant, Gen. Katumba came and when he saw me, he reminded me about an article I had written in the *NewVision* titled "dead or alive" and showed me how they were registering success. He offered me a trip to Mogadishu, where I realised the UPDF's great role in Somalia," Oloya said, Adding, "I visited a clinic in Somali where I found patients among whom was an 18-year-

old Mariam, who had been burnt, being bandaged by UPDF soldiers in great pain. She looked at me and said "Alhamdulillah" (Thank you for coming) but this was directed to UPDF officers, although I still hear her voice when I talk about Somalia," he recalled.

Born in Pamin-Yai Village in Amuru district in 1957, Oloya is an educationist, author, broadcaster, music-lover and journalist.